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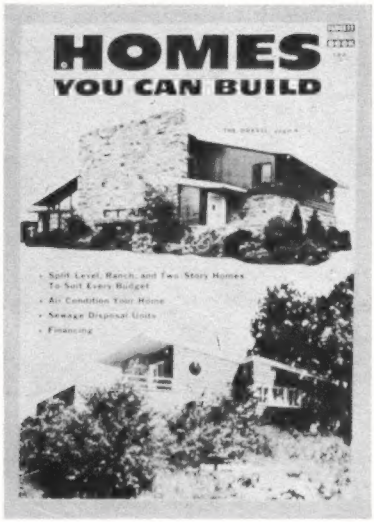
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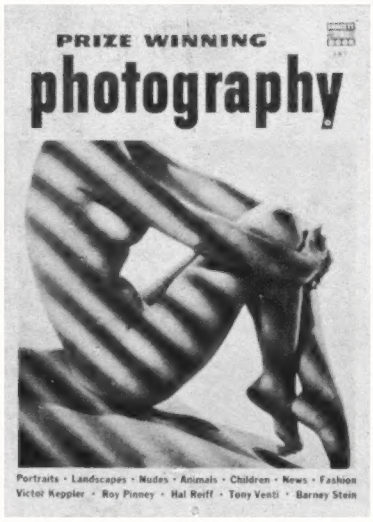
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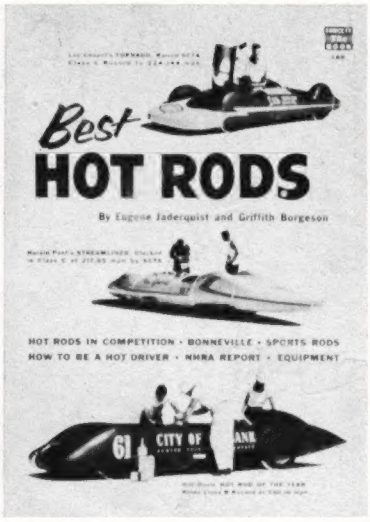
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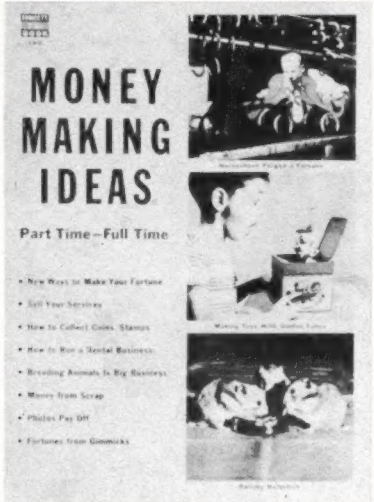
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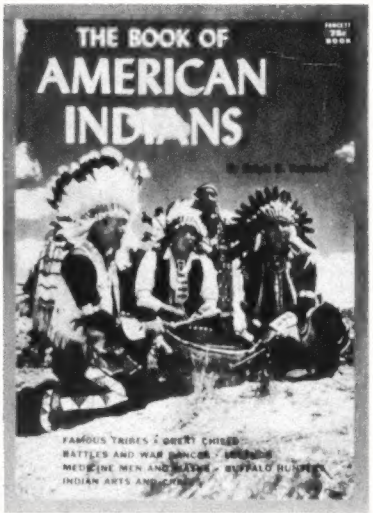
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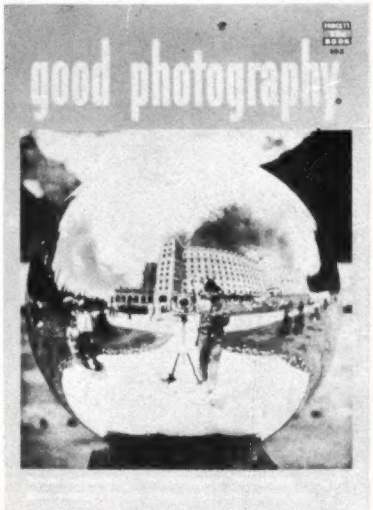
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JANUARY, 1954

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Black Wings Has My Angel

by Elliott Chaze

Cover by HAMILTON GREENE

VOL. 2 NO. 1

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CAVALIER is published every six weeks by Fawcett Publications, Inc., Fawcett Bldg., Fawcett Place, Greenwich, Conn. Editorial offices, 67 W. 44th St., New York 36, N. Y. Entered as second class matter August 15, 1952, at the post office at Greenwich, Conn., under the act of March 3, 1879, with additional entry at Louisville, Ky. Printed in U.S.A. Copyright 1953 by Fawcett Publications, Inc. Reprinting in whole or in part forbidden except by permission of the publishers. Address manuscripts to New York editorial office. Unacceptable contributions will be returned if accompanied by sufficient first class postage. Not responsible for lost manuscripts or photos. All remittances and correspondence concerning subscriptions as well as notification of change of address should be addressed to CAVALIER Circulation Dept., Fawcett Place, Greenwich, Conn. Price 25c a copy. Subscription price $3.00 for 12 issues in U.S., possessions and Canada. All other countries $6.00 for 12 issues. Foreign subscriptions and sales should be remitted by International Money Order in U.S. funds payable at Greenwich, Conn.



The author (right) and Lt. Cuthbert, his assistant, looking for the part that caused the crack-up.

I am a Jet Crash Detective

When a jet crashes there's usually not much left of it. It's a first class detective job to find in the rubble clues that reveal what caused the crash

by Capt. Richard G. Weber, USAF

There's a telephone painted red in my office at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona. It doesn't ring very often, but when it does, it means bad news. The red phone is our "crash phone."

The conversation is never very gabby.

"Crash on the gunnery range!"

"F-84 down near Parker Dam!"

That's all it takes to send me high-balling into the open desert in my yellow jeep. I'm the aircraft accident investigator at Luke, and my yellow jeep and I have quite enough work to do, since ours is one of the hottest jet bases in the world.

Here at Luke we get sharp, eager kids fresh out of jet school. Then we polish them into finished jet fighter pilots capable of mixing it with anything in the air or giving the whammy to an enemy ammo dump in a low-level bombing run at 550 miles an hour.

This means dangerous training. It can't be any other way when you consider that Luke is flying 10,000 jet hours a month. Our sub-sonic "blow-torches" are taking off or landing on the average of one every minute. And every month they're doing 50,000 high-speed dives and yowling pull-outs over ground targets. So now and then a crash occurs.

And now and then a man dies. But when this happens, we don't just sweep the mess under the rug and notify the next of kin. We rake through the rubble for tedious hours and days on end to find out what caused the crash, and to prevent that kind of accident from happening again.

Since this is my job it makes me a sort of detective—a jet crash detective if you like. I try to find out what happened. Was the crash caused by structural failure? Power failure? Pilot error? Men's lives depend on finding the answer.



The layman sees only a charred hole and scrap at the jet crash scene shown here, but to the trained eye of experts several clues explaining the crash may be evident. The Air Force has special crews to probe every jet accident.



If there is any hope for saving the pilot, crash squads rush in and chop him out; otherwise they don't disturb the wreck.

Most of the time it looks like a totally hopeless assignment. When a jet clobbers into the ground at a few miles an hour this side of the speed of sound, there's not much left to work with. Just a couple of hundred thousand pieces of splintered, twisted, scorched debris scattered over a square mile or two of scarred desert. Hardly a piece as big as your clenched fist.

Yet, in a surprisingly large percentage of cases, we come up with an answer. And when we do, it makes us feel pretty good. It means that somebody else will live to fly, somebody who might otherwise crash and die in exactly the same way.

I remember when one of our F-84's cracked up not long ago near the gunnery range southwest of Luke. The pilot had made his high-speed diving pass at the target and was pulling out in apparently good order. Suddenly he flipped into a series of six or seven violent rolls to the right. Then, traveling at nearly 500 miles an hour, the plane dove upside down into the ground.

There had been at least two other F-84 crashes like this one. They had been written off as unsolved. But finally we had some thin clues to go on. One was the pilot's last message before he crashed. He'd managed to rasp three words over his radio:

"Can't control it!"

Then there was a peculiarity about the rolls themselves. At the top of each roll, while the jet was on its back, it seemed to falter for a fraction of a second. This, coupled with the pilot's last words, gave us our first theory—that an aileron had snapped off.

We were wrong, but not very far wrong. As we picked through the debris, we found a piece of the airplane's aileron hydraulic boost. (Because a jet flies at such great speed manual control is impossible. So a hydraulic boost is used.)

We examined the piece of hydraulic boost and discovered that a small washer had worked out of its recess. There was conclusive evidence that the damage had occurred before the crash. The effect was to lock the hydraulic boost in the "down right" position and flip the jet into its fatal rolls. And we were satisfied that the same thing had happened in the previous crashes.

Our investigation brought about an important change in procedure throughout the Air Force. Previously that hydraulic boost had been inspected every 800 hours. Now it's checked every 50 hours. This particular mechanism isn't likely to cost Uncle Sam another airplane—or another life.

What a detective does when he reaches the scene of the crime is almost exactly what we do when we arrive at the scene of a crash. Only we do it on a far more massive scale. The detective warns everybody not to touch anything, sets up a police guard, shoos away idle onlookers, starts interviewing witnesses and taking pictures. So it goes with the jet crash detectives.

We throw out a cordon of air policemen and keep away everyone who doesn't have a "crash pass." A Luke photographer takes pictures of the wreckage from the four cardinal points of the compass, and close-ups of important pieces of debris. We draw a detailed diagram of the crash area, noting the ground scar made when the airplane hit. This way we can trace the path of the ship before impact.

Before the debris is touched, we chart every salient piece of it. This is done so that after the pieces have been gathered up and trucked back to the base we can reconstruct the crash scene just as we found it.

From long experience, we jet crash detectives have developed precise techniques for plucking important clues out of what seems to be a baffling jumble of junk.

Did the plane go in right side up or upside down?



because they may destroy clues which tell why the plane crashed.

Curiously enough, colored glass tells that story. The jet carries a green riding light on its right wing tip, red on the left. We scour the desert, looking for bits of powdered glass. If we find green glass on the right side of the crash area, the plane probably went in right side up. If red—upside down.

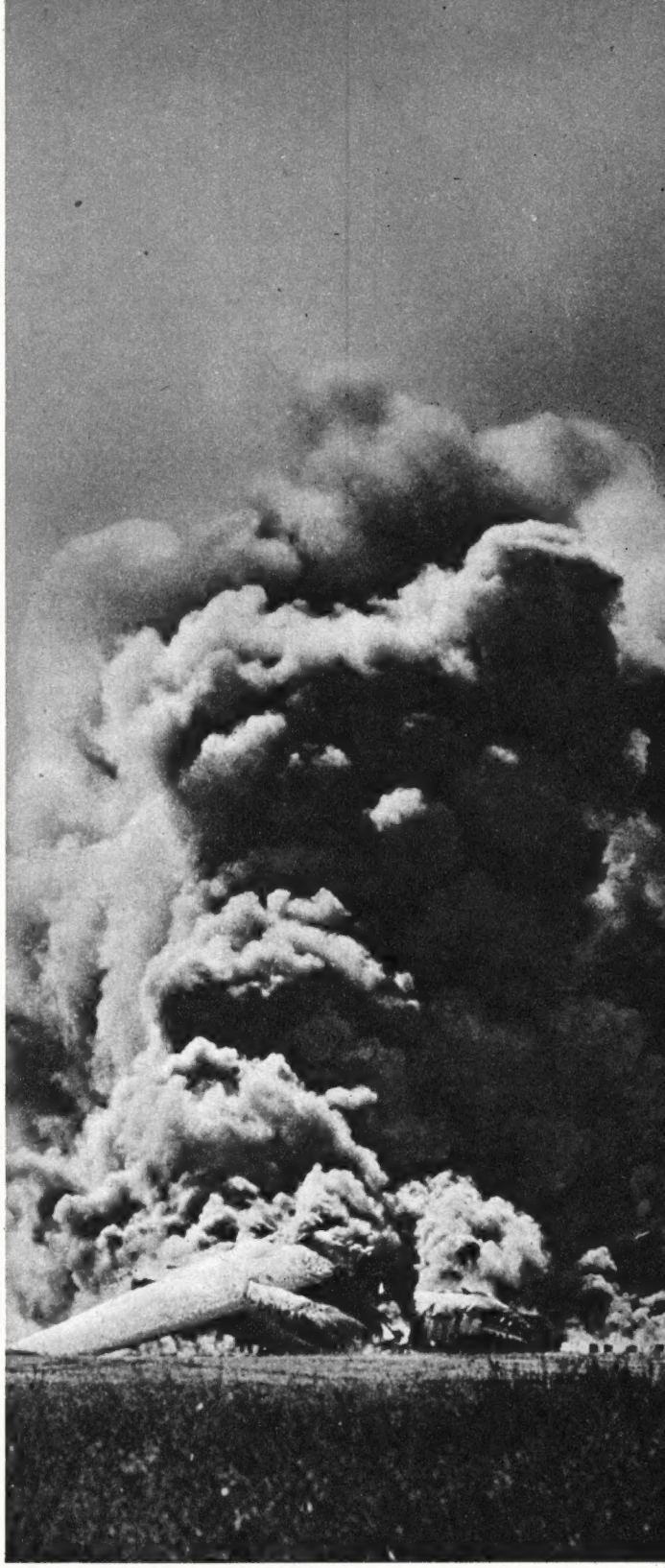
The position of the plane's radio equipment frequently gives us further evidence. When an F-84 goes in upside down, its radio usually breaks loose and plows straight into the ground. When the 84 crashes right side up, the radio bounces on ahead of the main body of debris.

Fairly often we can tell from what's left of the engine whether it was running at proper RPM at the time of the crash, or whether it wasn't running at all. This is important because if we can rule out engine failure then we can look for something else. It's the age-old technique of detectives everywhere—the process of elimination—checking off one possibility after another.

The speed and angle at which the jet crashed are also important. Even without witnesses, we can determine those things pretty well. If the debris covers a large area it means the plane crashed at a shallow angle. If the wreckage not only covers a large area but is pretty thoroughly ground-up, it usually means, too, that the jet was moving at high speed when it hit.

A plane going straight in, on the other hand, will gouge a great crater in the earth. Then the depth of the crater and the height of the walls of dirt around it indicate the ship's speed.

There was a case in which an F-84 pilot, cantering peacefully along at eight or nine miles a minute, suddenly heard two muffled explosions in his ship. He managed to belly-in aflame on an auxiliary field. His story of what happened, and an inspection of what was left of the airplane, helped investigators find a tiny spring [*Continued on page* 44]



Accidents taking place during take-offs and landings are often easier to solve since there is more of the plane left for crash inspectors to examine. But most jet crashes leave little more than a hole in the ground and scrap.

King or Nothing



James Aloysius Harden-Hickey fitted no pattern. He was a playboy who did not play, a cavalier who never laughed, a journalist who despised the common people. He was a duelist who did not kill. He became a king with one subject. And he declared war against England.

A knight errant of the middle ages? That is what he should have been. Actually many living Americans still remember Baron Harden-Hickey, King James I of Trinidad and his chancellery on 36th Street, New York City.

This fantastic monarch was an American. He was born in San Francisco, in 1854, where his father, E. C. Hickey, was well known. But, at an early age the child was taken from his native California by his mother to be brought up in the cultured atmosphere of Europe. Thus this descendant of Stuart royalists planted the ideas of grandeur in her son.

After he was graduated with honors from the Military College of St. Cyr, France's West Point, he found himself his own master with a small income and the reputation of being one of the most expert swordsmen in Paris.

But pride kept him from crossing swords with a commoner. It was beneath him. He became a man about town, a slim, dignified figure with moustache, strutting nobly in an attempt to imitate his hero, the exiled emperor of France.

Under a pseudonym he wrote *Letters of a Yankee* and *Marvellous Adventures of Nabuchodonosor Nosebreaker,* novels in which he sneered elaborately at the common people of both France and the United States. But he wrote seriously on behalf of the church, which at that time supported the Royalists, attacking the Republicans relentlessly. As a reward he was created Baron of the Holy Roman Empire.

The gay city of Paris fascinated Harden-Hickey. Haussman's boulevards were brilliant with uniforms; veterans of Italy, Mexico and Algiers swaggered in the cafes; the place was crowded with titled crooks and jewelled "overnight" countesses. Over on the left bank students and their grisettes danced a new dance, the can-can. And every night at the opera, Cora Pearl lounged regally in her box waiting for a signal from the small, pallid individual in the opposite box, the Emperor Napoleon III.

Young Harden-Hickey watched blazoned carriages in the tree-lined avenues. He swelled to see the swaggering Zouaves outside the Tuileries.

"One day," he told his mother, "I shall have Zouaves for *my* palace guard!"

In 1878, he married the Countess de Saint-Pery, by whom he had two children, a boy and a girl, and three years later he started *Triboulet,* a royalist publication financed by the Count de Chambord in the interest of the Bourbons.

For seven years he attacked the Republican government, was involved in 42 lawsuits, fined several hundred thousand francs and fought several duels.

It was to Aurelian Scholl, the brilliant Republican editor who opposed him, that he delivered one of his challenges:

"Meet me on the editorial page or in the Bois de Boulogne."

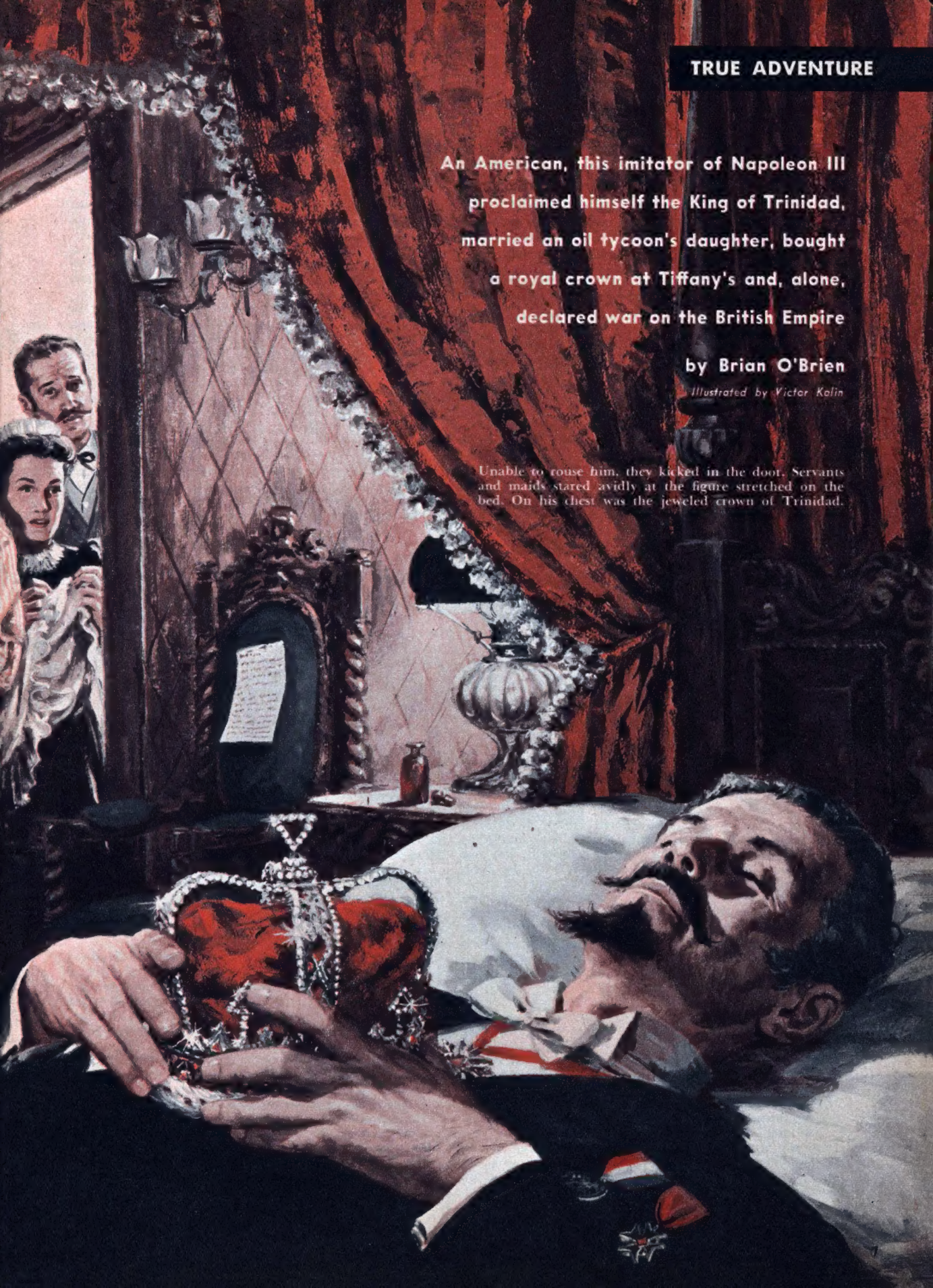
Scholl chose the Bois, the meeting ground for the duel.

Just after dawn they met, Harden-Hickey in black and accompanied by the Count de la Boissiere, his second. Swiftly the *piste* was chosen, swords measured and the principals took their stances.

An American, this imitator of Napoleon III proclaimed himself the King of Trinidad, married an oil tycoon's daughter, bought a royal crown at Tiffany's and, alone, declared war on the British Empire

by Brian O'Brien

Illustrated by Victor Kalin



Unable to rouse him, they kicked in the door. Servants and maids stared avidly at the figure stretched on the bed. On his chest was the jeweled crown of Trinidad.

Harden-Hickey was the slighter, his pantaloons black and tight to his legs.

They saluted, Harden-Hickey tapped his enemy's sword, parried a swift lunge, then quickly moved in and stuck Scholl in the sword arm. While the attendant doctor examined the wound, Harden-Hickey bowed and went nonchalantly home to breakfast.

That was the first of many such meetings. He wounded Jean Moreas, M. Taine and others, always scorning to kill them, bowing icily, disdaining conciliation and left them bleeding. People began to avoid the erect young figure who walked with such hauteur.

In 1888, the Count de Chambord died and *Triboulet* was forced to close down. About the same time Harden-Hickey was divorced. Claiming his children, whom he left in charge of his friend de la Boissiere, he embarked upon a voyage around the World.

When his ship, the *Astoria,* commanded by Captain Jackson, was crossing the South Atlantic, she anchored off the uninhabited island of Trinidad, 700 miles from the coast of Brazil, to replenish water casks. Harden-Hickey asked the captain about the island.

"She's derelict," Jackson told his passenger. "Don't belong to no one."

Harden-Hickey eyed the pinnacles of rotted lava that jutted above the ocean and asked to be put ashore.

When he was ready, four seamen rowed him in. Curiously he stared about him at lofty cliffs stained red, yellow and blue with minerals. An enormous land crab nipped his shoe. With an exclamation he kicked it away. Then he took from an inside pocket a square of red silk on which he had painted a yellow triangle. This he fastened to a length of driftwood which he jammed upright in the black earth. Amid screaming birds, turtles and landcrabs, the sailors stared in amazement as he stepped back.

"By right of occupation," they heard him say, "I claim this land. In the sight of these witnesses I proclaim myself, James A. Harden-Hickey, King James I of the Principality of Trinidad."

Regally he stepped into the boat and commanded the awed seamen to row back to the *Astoria.*

For the rest of the voyage he remained aloof from the ship's company, pacing the quarterdeck alone or staring off across the empty ocean, a slim, lonely figure separated from the rest of the world by his dreams. He left the ship in India and remained there to study Buddhism.

In 1890, at the age of 36, he returned to Paris where he met Annie Flagler, daughter of the Standard Oil millionaire, John H. Flagler. He proposed to her. To his indignation, Annie's father objected and accused Hickey of being a haughty young fop and a fortune hunter. Harden-Hickey disdained to tell Flagler of his royal status and, one year later, married Annie "without settlement" in the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York City.

For two years they lived on his income. He painted and exhibited water colors and occupied himself in writing a book called *Euthanasia, or the Aesthetics of Suicide,* in which he quoted Plato, Cicero and Shakespeare to prove the nobility of self destruction and to lay down conditions under which he deemed suicide obligatory.

At the end of the two years his income and capital were gone. His wife's mother had left her a large fortune which was held in trust by her father. Harden-Hickey demanded that the money be handed over to his care. Her father, however, while admiring the intelligence and breeding of his son-in-law, refused to turn the money over, saying that Hickey was not enough of a business man to administer a large fortune.

Affronted, Harden-Hickey began travelling again, just as he had after the fall of *Triboulet.* Pride prevented him from going directly to Flagler to ask for money, so he instructed his wife to produce large sums. She did, and immediately he purchased several enormous tracts of land, ranches and mines in California, Texas and Mexico. The money, of course, came from Flagler. Somehow, Hickey thought, he must rise above his father-in-law and preserve his ego. So he sent for his old friend, de la Boissiere, and through him made an official proclamation to the world, announcing himself King of Trinidad.

The proclamation made little stir; however, a few minor powers did officially recognize the claim. American newspapers made a nine-day wonder of Flagler's daughter and called her the "American queen." Then interest died.

But King James I wasted no time. He appointed de la Boissiere Minister of Foreign Affairs, installed a chancellery at 217 West 36th Street in New York City, and from there issued a court circular.

The document advised that the new state would be governed by military dictatorship under the royal standard, a yellow triangle on a red background. It invited settlers of good social position and private fortune to purchase ten $200 bonds which would entitle them to passage to the island and membership in the kingdom's aristocracy. All labor was to be performed by Chinese coolies; the bondholders would enjoy a life of ease and luxury. To encourage his prospective subjects in the human virtues his majesty established an order of chivalry, the Order of the Insignia of the Cross of Trinidad. For himself, King James ordered a royal crown. He issued postage stamps which pictured the island. Four hundred Chinese were shipped from San Francisco to begin construction of docks and wharves on the island, and an agent was established there.

Then a terrible thing happened.

A British company, laying a cable to Brazil, found Trinidad on its line. Britain promptly seized the island as a cable station. Brazil objected. So did King James I.

Britain pointed out that since Dr. Halley, the astronomer, had visited the island in 1698 it belonged to the British Empire. Brazil insisted that Portuguese sailors had often sheltered on the island. It therefore belonged to Brazil.

King James stated that Britain had never settled on the island and Brazil had abandoned it; therefore their claims had lapsed.

But King James was ignored. In Bahia, Brazilians pelted the British Consulate General with stones. Britain landed a detachment of armed troops on Trinidad. The world looked for war.

King James I acted vigorously. He addressed a note to all the powers of Europe and to our State Department advising them:

That in the course of the month of September, 1893, Baron Harden-Hickey officially notified all the Powers of his taking possession of the island of Trinidad.

In consequence of these official notifications several Powers have recognized the new Principality and its Prince, and at all events none thought it necessary to raise objections or formulate opposition.

To Richard Olney, our Secretary of State, King James I added the following protest:

I beg of your Excellency to ask of the Government of the United States of North America to recognize the Principality of Trinidad as an independent State and to come to an understanding with the other American powers in order to guarantee its neutrality.

Mr. Olney turned the letter over to the Washington correspondents as a "crank" message.

Reporters, eager for news, beseiged the Chancellery. They found a shabby brownstone house with a handwritten notice pinned to the front door:

Chancellerie de la Principaute de Trinidad.

Inside was a bare office, its table piled with bonds, prospectuses, stamps, the Royal proclamations and little boxes containing Cross of Trinidad decorations. On the wall, a notice listed sailings to Trinidad.

A neat, elderly gentleman in clothing of European cut greeted the reporters in courtly fashion and introduced

them to a thin, austere person with a small moustache, whom he addressed as "your Majesty."

"Hey, Frenchie!" the reporters yelled. "Where's this Trinidad? Look, King. Who gave you the right to claim this island? Wanna make a statement, King? You gonna fight for your island? Come on. Tell us what you're gonna do. You gonna declare war? Yeah! You gonna fight the Limeys? What with? You gotta army, King? You. . ."

Scarlet, the Count de la Boissiere tried to answer them. King James stared haughtily, disdaining to reply to their laughter. At last he turned to his minister.

"Tell these—gentlemen," he said with icy scorn, "that I have nothing to say to them."

But one of them, Henri Pene du Bois of the New York *Times*, saw nothing ridiculous in the little king and his shabby chancellery.

"It's pathetic," he told his editor, Henry N. Cary. "Those men are fighting for what they believe is their right. An American king, battling for his kingdom against the greatest power on earth. There's a man of imagination! Fire. . ."

"Write it that way," Cary ordered.

The reporter faced the bitterly suspicious monarch. Perhaps Harden-Hickey recognized a kindred soul, one to whom he could explain his dreams. He accepted him and for a while the New York *Times* was the official organ of the Principality and du Bois and Cary were created *chevaliers* of the Order of Trinidad. But Britain and Brazil continued to ignore proclamations of King James I.

Dressed in top hat, white tie, tails, the red and yellow ribbon of the Order across his chest, he called on embassies and legations. Clerks came to peek and snigger at the figure. He was left to cool his high, polished heels, brushed off by underlings. He retired, blazing at their laughter.

No one would help him. Very well, he would take action himself. Since his kingdom had been invaded by a foreign power there was only one thing left to do—declare war! He formally declared war against Great Britain. He drew up plans for an invasion of England through Ireland. This plan he presented to his father-in-law.

Surely, Harden-Hickey thought, he was honoring the despised Flagler by permitting him to join in the battle of majesty against the enemies of divine right. But Flagler would have nothing to do with the war. Harden-Hickey broke with him forever.

Leaving his wife, who was caring for his son and daughter, he travelled the country in kingly fashion, seeking to form alliances powerful enough to aid him against his enemy. Just as he had given his brilliant [*Continued on page* 48]



"By the right of occupation. . ." the amazed sailors heard him say, "I proclaim myself, James A. Harden-Hickey, King James I of the Principality of Trinidad."

Stopped by two bullets in his leg, scared tough guy R. L. Freeman submits while a guard searches for hidden weapons.

Escapee A. B. Tolley had to be returned on horseback. His legs were so frostbitten he couldn't stand.



Crude weapons played a big part in the escape. The blade Roy Best holds was made from a steel ruler.



When the door of the solitary cell closed on James Sherbondy, the Canon City break was officially over.



We Got 'Em All At Canon City

The real story behind one of America's most shocking prison breaks told by a reporter who carried a gun instead of a pencil

by John Snyder

We got it that night. It was December 30, 1947, and we got it good.

A minute or two after seven o'clock, I was getting ready to leave the city room of the *Denver Post* for dinner when one of our wire service printers started clanging out a bulletin. A couple of us stopped casually to see what was coming in on the wire—and then we both yelled. A break was underway at the Colorado state penitentiary in Canon City, about 120 miles southwest of Denver!

Hurriedly, we placed a long-distance call to Roy Best, the prison's rugged cowboy warden. He told us just how big—and how bad—the break really was. Twelve stir-crazy convicts, he said—three of them brutal killers and every one of them a confirmed enemy of society—had battered their way out of the pen and had taken four guards as hostages.

Roy tried to talk us out of driving to the prison. The roads from Denver, he warned, were covered with ice and snow. It took us four hours, the worst drive I ever made in my life.

At the prison we found Best—a short, pudgy man with a reputation for toughness as a prison warden—running the search from behind his desk. He had a dozen posses scattered around Canon and the surrounding hills, and he was receiving information and barking out orders by telephone and police radio.

Pushing our way through the mob of guards jammed into the warden's office, we slid in beside Roy's desk. Between the phone calls and the orders, he told us what had happened.

The escape plot was hatched right after supper that night in Cellhouse 6, where the most vicious cons are locked up in a row of steel cages known as "Little Siberia."

Among the first of the inmates to march back to the cellhouse that night from the dining hall were Orville Turley, a 54-year-old murderer doing life for strangling a crippled Denver widow and stuffing her body down a narrow furnace pipe, and John Klinger, 42, an escape-happy kidnapper.

Another tough con—James B. Sherbondy, a youthful baby-faced killer serving life for brutally shooting down an unarmed deputy sheriff—slipped into the cellblock unnoticed.

Instead of going to their cells on the upper tiers, Turley and Klinger lurked in the shadows of the cellblock's main floor with Sherbondy. Seconds later, when a middle-aged guard walked in to make a routine cell count, they were waiting for him with an iron bar. One was down.

The trio quickly leaped to the next target, a fellow inmate who knew how to operate the mechanism that unlocked all the cells in "Little Siberia." They told him they'd kill him if he didn't open the doors.

When the cell doors were sprung open, one of the cons yelled, "All you guys who want to, come on! Those who don't can stay in their damned cells!" Nine rushed out. Five stayed behind.

About this time another guard, Einston Williams, unaware that anything was wrong, entered the cellhouse. He didn't have a chance. The rampaging convicts next raced out into the prison yard.

They had several weapons: a heavy wrench, iron bars,

The country around Canon City penitentiary would seem to discourage escape, but the bloody record proves otherwise.







The end of the break for two escapees. Orville Turley lies dead

An undertaker works on John Klinger, first convict killed in the escape. The wire in his hands was used on guards.

and at least two "shotgun-pistols" made from lengths of pipe, friction tape and springs from cigarette lighters. They also had shells for the guns.

Once in the yard, the cons quickly overpowered three more guards. Moving swiftly, the escapees kept these officers and Williams as hostages and pushed on through the snowy darkness to the prison's North Gate where they had a piece of unexpected luck. The armed guard who should have been on duty—and who might have been able to stop the break—was away from his post. (Before the night was over, that guard was fired.)

Hurriedly, the convicts went to work on the large locks with their bars and wrench. In a few seconds they were on "the outside." Free!

The break had taken less than five minutes.

Roy Best was mad as hell about the break. It was the first major disturbance at the prison since he'd stepped into the job 20 years before. He swore to us that he'd get every last one of the cons, dead or alive.

He said that one con already had been killed inside Canon, and that two more had been captured after a gunfight at a ranch in the desolate Soapy Hill country south of the city.

The slain escapee was Klinger, who had been gunned down in a residential area near the prison, Best said, when prowling guards spotted him running crazily down a street.

At the Soapy Hill gunfight, a rancher held hostage with his young son by the cornered cons, had been shot in the arm. Chet Yoe, a guard captain, had been shot in the face during the bloody fight.

Best was worried about the hostage guards. Frowning, he told us he was afraid they would be killed. While he was talking, the telephone rang. It was one of the hostages. He told the warden that he and two of the other hostage guards had been stripped of their outer clothing and then released just outside of town. They hadn't been hurt. This left only one guard, Williams, still in the custody of the escapees.

Our first real news break came from the Soapy Hill ranch —scene of the earlier gunfight—shortly after midnight. Guards still there telephoned that there actually had been four convicts at the ranch, but that two of them had fled during the wild struggle.

The two at large were A. B. Tolley, a young Texas-born killer doing life for beating his wife's mother to death, and R. L. Freeman, a kidnapper. Billy Frank New, a car thief and escape artist, and Frank Trujillo, a young burglar-gunman had been captured in the fight.

After receiving the report, Best immediately sent another carload of officers to the ranch. Dave Mathias, a *Post* photographer, and I went with them.

The road was awful and the snow made it worse. We were almost at the ranch when a flashlight winked at us from up the road. Our driver, a guard captain, hurriedly blinked his lights in return and brought the car to a stop. A guard, carrying a flashlight in one hand and a rifle in the other, dog-trotted up to us.

"We're trailin' Freeman," he panted. "We ain't far behind him, either. He's been runnin' right down this road!"

"Where's Tolley?" our driver asked.

"They got him up in the hills on the other side of the ranch. But his legs are frozen and they can't bring him down 'till daylight."

I looked at my watch. It was almost 1:30.

After telling the guard that he'd send more men down to help look for Freeman we drove on. As soon as we looked the Smith place over I told one of the officers heading back for the Freeman hunt that Dave and I were going along.

"Got a gun?" he asked.

"No."

"Then you better take these." He shoved a nickel-plated revolver and a box of shells at me.

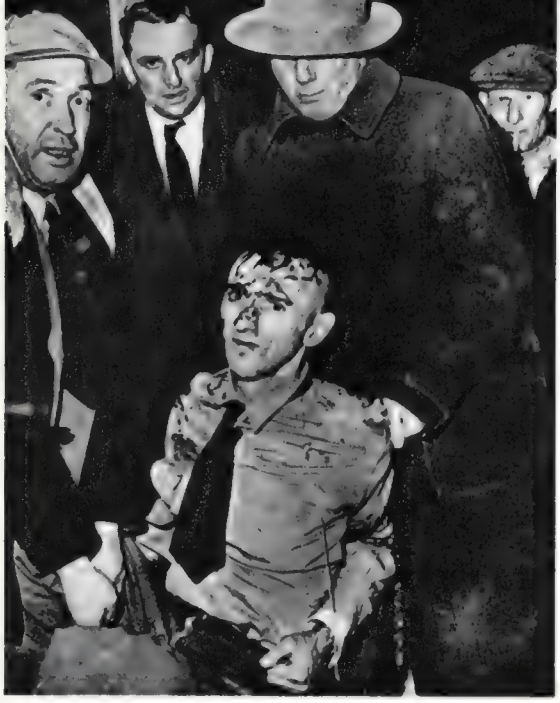
It took only a few minutes in the car to catch up with the two guards trailing Freeman. The convict's tracks were easily visible in the snow so the two possemen hopped into the car to speed up the chase. I jumped out on the running board to watch the tracks closer. Suddenly I yelled, and the car skidded sideways to a stop. The tracks suddenly led off the road and up the side of a tree-studded bluff. A lean, long-legged guard scrambled through a barbed-wire fence and started up the bluff. "Watch these damned trees," he yelled. "He might be behind any one of 'em!"

I took a deep breath, tightened the hold on my gun and plunged after the officers. The bluff was steeper than it looked and we had trouble climbing it.

I was better off than Dave. At least I had boots and gloves. He had neither, and he was carrying his heavy Speed Graphic and a photog's bag that kept giving him trouble.



in the snow while wounded Richard Heilman is led to a car.



Werner Schwartzmiller ran into the strangest deal of all—a middle-aged housewife battered him with a hammer.

Once on top of the bluff we followed the tracks along the level, thinking that Freeman might pop out at us any minute. The snow was falling harder and it was cold and quiet. So quiet that you knew something had to happen. It did.

One of the guards was carrying a spotlight and he flicked it on, sweeping the beam down across the slope. Suddenly, so fast that it seemed impossible, there it was—a running ghostly figure—plunging madly through the falling snow!

"There he is!" someone yelled. Then everyone but Dave and I fired. We didn't know whether he was hit or not. He jumped with the shots, but disappeared near some pines. We left the guard with the light at the top to cover us while we ran down the slope. But Freeman was too fast for us. He'd slipped away from the pines and was out.

We waved the guard with the spotlight down and he took up his position by me as we started advancing toward the road. When we got to the fence, we stopped. There were no tracks, either breaking into the ditch below us or running into the road. Mystified, the man with the light swung the beam to the right, in front of the patrol. Nothing there. He swung it to the left, in front of himself and me.

Both of us saw Freeman at the same time. He was just a few feet away, hugging the side of the ditch right at our feet! The guard with the light fired twice. Freeman screamed out, "Please, God! Don't shoot again!"

I'll never forget that scream as long as I live. The guard didn't shoot again. He didn't need to. Both slugs from a Luger had ripped into Freeman's legs. He was exhausted from the chase and tears streamed down his face.

In the brightness of the spotlight Dave and I knew we had a once-in-a-lifetime story and picture—only Dave couldn't work his camera! Both his hands, one of them still inside the camera strap, were so cold he couldn't move them.

With him telling me exactly what to do, I set the range and cocked the shutter, ran over and grabbed the spotlight out of the guard's hands and shoved it close to Freeman's face. Dave snapped his shutter, I pushed the light back to the guard, raced back to Dave, pulled out the used flashbulb and injected another. We went through that process a dozen times in a few seconds, shooting pictures until there was nothing left to shoot. As it turned out, we were the only newspapermen to be in on an actual capture during the entire break. And one of those pictures we shot made Page 1 of the *Denver Post*, "Picture of the Week" in *Life*—and provided a major highlight for the subsequent movie, *Canon City*.

When we got back to the prison with Freeman, we found a large group of happy guards milling around in the warden's office. Smack in the center of the commotion was Williams, the officer who had been the only remaining hostage when we left. He was nursing a sore neck and a bruised face, but other than that, he grinned, he wasn't hurt.

He told me that the full credit for his rescue—and the capture of one of the toughest cons in the break—went to a tiny, middle-aged farm wife, Mrs. Lawrence N. Oliver.

Williams said he had been taken to the Olivers' modest farm home a few miles from Canon by three of the escapees —Werner Schwartzmiller, a hatchet-faced gunman; Richard Heilman, a notorious kidnapper, and Turley.

Mrs. Oliver was preparing supper. Her husband, a small man, was feeding the couple's pet puppy. The cons rushed Williams into the house and told the Olivers they were a work detail on their way back to the pen.

"I tried to warn them," Williams told me, "but I wasn't quick enough. One of the guys slugged me in the face and knocked me down."

Another of the cons grabbed a rifle and covered Williams and the Olivers with it. After tying Williams to a chair, Heilman and Turley left the farmhouse. Schwartzmiller stayed behind, sitting a few feet from Mrs. Oliver and the two men with the rifle pointed at them.

As the hours crawled by, Mrs. Oliver noticed that Schwartzmiller was more worried about the men than about her. When the con left his chair for a moment to get a drink of water in the kitchen, she quickly picked up a nearby hammer and waited.

Schwartzmiller returned and settled down in his chair. As nonchalantly as possible, Mrs. Oliver stood up and walked behind him—with the hammer hidden behind her skirt. "He didn't even turn his head," Williams told me.

She aimed for his head with the first blow, but missed. It grazed off his shoulder. But before Schwartzmiller could scramble to his feet, she brought the hammer down again. This time her aim was perfect and the convict, blood streaming from his head, was battered to the floor. Williams worked his hands free and he and Oliver jumped Schwartzmiller.

[*Continued on page* 46]



No one bothered them as they removed the precious prize from the wall—every guard in the Louvre had the day off.

The Man Who Stole the MONA LISA

It seems incredible that the world's most famous painting could be stolen. Yet that's exactly what happend in 1911 —with the strangest motive in the annals of crime

by Martin Abramson

Illustrated by George Wilson

Everything about the crime was amazing. The thief didn't make a franc on the deal yet a complete stranger, who was in no way involved in the theft, made a fortune out of it. The woman who provided the motive was dead before the plan of the robbery was ever thought of. Not one of the master criminals in Europe would have dared try the job, but the man who pulled it was an amateur. The circumstances surrounding the actual theft were at times so ridiculous as to be unbelievable. All in all, the stealing of the Mona Lisa stands as one of the most fantastic robberies of our times. And 43 years later the man who stole the painting remains one of the most unusual characters in the history of crime.

This strange thief of the Mona Lisa was a wandering 23-year-old glass cutter named Vincenzo Perugia. He went to France from Italy as a wall-painter but he learned the glazier trade and worked at it for seven different picture-framing houses in various parts of France. Short, pasty-faced, and beak-nosed, Perugia was a man who wanted desperately to be loved, but he just didn't have what it takes.

After many rebuffs Perugia finally found an older woman who was willing to become his mistress. But after a while, he lost her to another man. This setback enraged him so that he went after his rival with a hammer. The police picked him up and put him away for six months on an assault charge.

A few weeks after Perugia got out of jail, he went to work for Gobier, one of the largest picture-framing companies in Paris. When the firm got a contract to frame paintings in the Louvre, the famous museum for art treasures, Perugia began working there every day. One morning, he was given the plum assignment of his profession—he was to cut the glass for a new frame that would house Leonardo Da Vinci's incomparable Mona Lisa.

While Perugia's daily life was moving along fine, his night life was still full of frustration. Eventually he was driven to heavy drinking bouts. One night he journeyed to the apartment of his former mistress but finding the door barred to him went away screaming vile threats. Stumbling from one Parisian haunt to another, he finally wound up in a cafe in the Montmarte sector. There he sat hunched in his seat, drinking and ogling the young girls.

It was nearly midnight when an attractive, dark-eyed girl of about 19 came in, escorted by an older man. Perugia found he couldn't keep his eyes off her exquisite figure, and her oval features. The girl's escort immediately began an animated conversation. She sat attentively, sometimes putting in a word or two, sometimes just broadening the cryptic smile she wore.

A half hour and four drinks later, the escort began shouting that he wanted her to consider herself engaged to him. The more she cautioned him to keep quiet the more violent his shouts became. Soon everyone in the cafe was watching. Embarrassed, the girl turned a pleading face toward the orchestra leader. He picked up the cue immediately and gestured at his musicians for loud dance music.

The girl seized her escort's arm and half-pulled him out onto the dance floor. But no matter how loud the music swelled, the man's voice grew louder. Suddenly, the escort wrenched the girl's wrist and she screamed out in pain. The music stopped. The girl tried to run off the dance floor—and it nearly cost her her life. For the drunken escort now lunged at her with a knife, missed, then lunged again and gashed her in the shoulder. She collapsed to the floor, bleeding.

The first man with enough presence of mind to move was the stabber—he bolted through the door before anybody could stop him.

Perugia, dulled by drink, had watched the doings with his mouth open. Finally, he jumped up, muttered an oath and ran towards the girl. He lifted her over his shoulder, and thundered to the manager of the cafe when he tried to take her from him. "Leave her alone.

Only I can take care of her." Then he staggered crazily into the street and up to his one-room apartment three blocks away. There, he eased the girl gently down on his bed, bathed and dressed her wound, and sat in a chair next to her as she slept fitfully through the night.

On this highly-charged, almost Hollywoodish note, the great romance in Vincenzo Perugia's life began. The dark-eyed girl was Mathilde Souverre, a domestic. She was the first girl Perugia had ever met who fully returned his overflowing passions and who can say for sure whether it was only gratitude she felt or sincere and abiding love?

At first, Perugia called for Mathilde at the fine home where she worked. But her wealthy employer took a dislike to the pasty-faced glazier and when he learned that Perugia had a prison record, warned Mathilde to keep away from him. She ignored the advice and kept meeting Perugia secretly.

His co-workers at the Louvre soon realized that the little glazier had come upon a great happiness, but he remained close-mouthed about Mathilde. Still haunted by his previous failures in love he felt that if anybody knew he had a sweetheart, she might be stolen away from him.

A little more than a year after the lovers first met disaster struck. One night, Mathilde failed to keep her appointment with Perugia. After three hours of waiting, he went to her employer's home, banged on the door, and demanded to know where she was. Then the bad news came. The lovely, young Mathilde had been stricken with a heart attack and, after lingering for two days, had died.

For Perugia, it was as if the earth had caved in under him. He left his job. Life no longer had a meaning. He sustained it indifferently by taking odd jobs and eating crumbs. Sometimes, when hunger became too great he picked pockets. Once he was caught and taken to the police station but his victim was a sentimentalist and withdrew his complaint.

One Sunday morning, Perugia found himself near the Louvre and walked inside. He toured the familiar rooms and was going out again when he decided to look at the Mona Lisa and see how his frame was holding up. As he stood in front of Da Vinci's masterpiece, he suddenly felt as if he'd been charged with electrical energy.

The woman in the painting he was staring at was not Lisa Gherardini del Gioconda, the most beautiful woman in Florence who became known as Mona Lisa after Da Vinci spent four years painting her. She was instead, Mathilde Souverre!

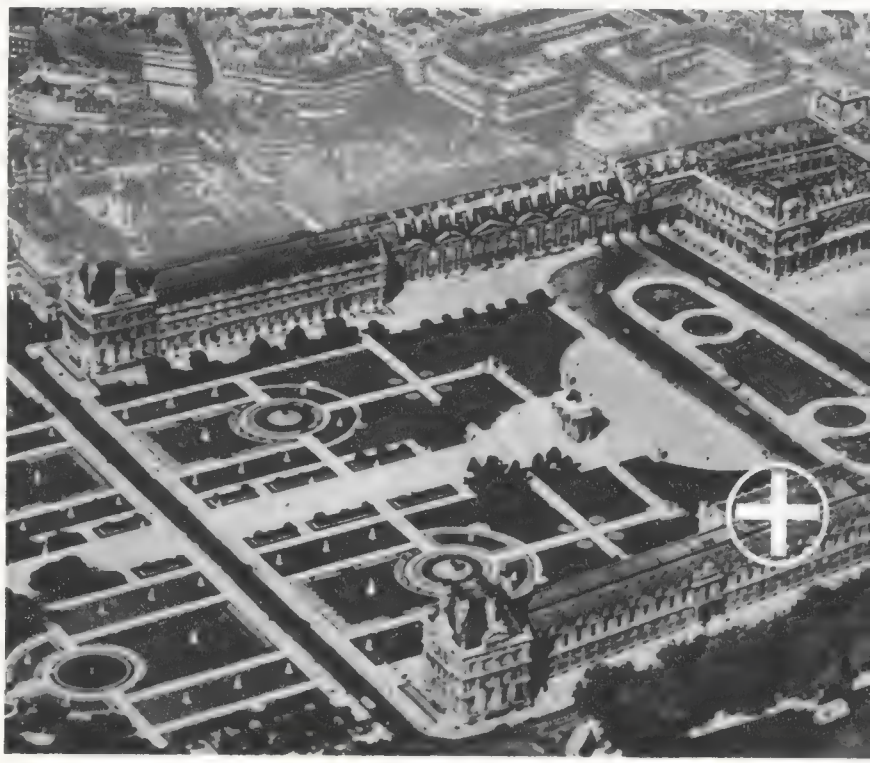
There was indeed a slight resemblance between these two women who lived 400 years apart—the proud social leader of Florence and the dark-eyed domestic of Paris. Their hair was combed the same way, their eyes had the same coloring, and the aloof half-smile which used to play around Mathilde's mouth was not unlike the strange Mona Lisa smile, which has fascinated poets of every generation.

During the next few weeks, Perugia visited the portrait faithfully. Each day, he became more and more convinced that the two women were one. He even read a special meaning into the fact that Da Vinci had been in love with Lisa del Gioconda, his model, but could not marry her because she already had a husband. Da Vinci's love had been dead to him, just as Perugia's was dead.

The glazier came to a decision. He must have the Mona Lisa so that his love could be close to him, even if she could not be brought back to life. To get the painting for his own meant he would, of course, have to steal it.

Being a man of limited mental equipment, the only plan Perugia could devise for his robbery was a simple one. Yet its utter simplicity insured its success.

Perugia knew that the public was barred from the Louvre every Monday, the day set aside for cleaning. He also knew that anyone who walked around the museum on Mondays wearing a work smock was automatically accepted as a member of the staff. He decided he would go to the Louvre on a Sunday and hide overnight in a storeroom. The next morning, he would put on his smock and stroll off with the prize.



The palace of the Louvre was supposed to be burglar-proof, but Vincenzo Perugia had

The Mona Lisa had been painted on a four-and-a-half square foot piece of Italian walnut and was mounted in a heavy wooden frame. With the exterior and cradle, the whole business weighed more than 180 pounds, too much for Perugia to handle alone. He needed an accomplice and he found him in Vincent Lancelotti, an impressionable, weak-minded carpenter and frustrated artist who regarded Perugia with awe because he had cut frames in the Louvre.

Perugia inveigled Lancelotti into the plot by convincing him it was his sacred duty to help return the Mona Lisa to their native Italy. After all, he told Lancelotti, it was a portrait of an Italian beauty painted by an Italian artist. Why should it be denied to Italian culture? King Frances I of France may have purchased it for 4,000 golden florins but the exchange of such a crass item as money could not

convert Italian art into French art. He never told the carpenter the real reason for wanting the painting.

In that summer of 1911, there was another man in Paris who was also concocting a plot around the Mona Lisa. He was a dashing, intercontinental swindler who was obsessed not by love for a dead woman, but by a very vital love for the franc. His name was Eduardo De Valfierno.

De Valfierno had returned to his native Paris after long years of profitable trickery on the American continent. First in Argentina and later in Mexico he had specialized in rooking art-loving American millionaires by selling them copies of Murillos which he passed off as originals.

The swindler had an associate named Yves Chaudron who turned out copies with assembly-line precision.



no trouble cracking the section (marked by X) where the Mona Lisa was displayed.

Once a copy was completed, the Marquis would sneak it into one of the galleries and stick it in the back of the roomy frame housing an original Murillo. Later he would escort his sucker through the gallery and say, "See that famous Murillo. That's the expensive painting that I will steal for you." Then he would tell his victim to draw a mark with indelible ink on the back of the canvas to assure him that the "original" would be delivered to him.

After the sucker had returned to the United States, De Valfierno would remove the copy from the back of the frame and ship it to his client, citing the mark on the back as the proof that it was the real Murillo!

When De Valfierno got bored with Mexico, he took the faithful Chaudron to Paris and put him to work painting copies of Titians, Millets and Corots. One day, a French gossip columnist who had a bad hangover and nothing to write about, printed a rumor that the Mona Lisa had been stolen. The French just laughed at the rumor but in a matter of hours one of the De Valfierno millionaire suckers in America was on the long distance phone asking if the swindler could sell him the stolen masterpiece!

As a seasoned professional criminal, De Valfierno had never even contemplated a swindle with something as valuable as the Mona Lisa as bait, but the discovery that there were no limits to an American art collector's gullibility opened up new vistas. Immediately he assured his caller that he had promoted the grand theft and that the art prize of the world was for sale for a few million francs. As soon as he closed the deal, he put Chaudron to work making up the copy.

This swindle was so easy that De Valfierno decided to cast out some additional bait. He had Chaudron make up six more copies and shipped them to his contact men in America. He felt he could keep planting rumors about a Mona Lisa theft in the papers to lure the victims. But, as it turned out, he didn't have to plant any rumors. Perugia came barging into the picture and dropped an honest-to-goodness, front-page theft right in the swindler's lap.

At 4 p.m. on Sunday, August 21, 1911, Perugia and Lancelotti entered the Louvre as sightseers. They hid their white smocks under their coats and made their way to the storeroom where they spent the night. In the morning they put on their smocks, and walked down to the Salon Carré where the Mona Lisa hung in a place of honor. Gaston Picquet, the head workman at the Louvre, nodded a greeting to Perugia. He accepted his presence merely as an indication that he had returned to his old job.

At 8 o'clock, Picquet called all his workmen into the Grand Gallerie for instructions. Perugia and Lancelotti lagged behind, then ducked back to the Salon Carré. They mounted a stepladder, removed the prize and carried it up a small cramped stairway to a little-used back door. Perugia knew this door led onto a courtyard which gave access to the open street. Not a single guard bothered the two men—for the simple reason that there were no guards. They all had Mondays off!

The two men removed the masterpiece from the frame and shadowbox, then tried to open the door. It was locked. Perugia found a screwdriver and began working on the knob. After a few minutes it fell off, but he still couldn't get the door open. At this point, the official plumber for the Louvre, a man named Sauvet, came clattering down the stairway. He saw the abandoned frame and shadowbox, and although Perugia quickly hid the Mona Lisa panel behind him, the circumstances were suspicious enough for Monsieur Le Plumber to howl for every gendarme in Paris. Instead, he inquired politely, "Having trouble opening the door?"

"Yes," said Perugia. "We were told to take this old frame out to the courtyard and now the door won't open."

"Well then, let me help you," said the plumber. He produced a master key which opened the door, and then went blithely about his business.

Once out in the street, Perugia threw his smock over the painting and carried it like a package.

Now there remained the matter of getting rid of Lancelotti. Perugia set up a rendezvous [*Continued on page* 46]

Booby



Muldoon gave us time to gawk at the sign-board for a while. Then he broke the ice by assembling one of the mine detectors

Trap Genius



Muldoon taught us everything we knew about booby traps. He even went out of his way to teach us something he didn't know

by Dan T. Moore

Illustrated by Hamilton Greene

Muldoon was a tough hard-drinking, fist-fighting Irishman of the old "soak your knuckles in brine" school. He was also the most blasphemous, and oldest sergeant in the First Marine Division, and the outstanding booby-trap expert of the U.N. Forces in Korea. The only interests he had in life were women and booby traps—booby traps first.

"And what," he used to roar to his trainees, "is the difference? A woman is a two-legged booby trap with a skirt. A booby trap is a metal woman with an explosive temper and no sense of humor." This used to lay us in the aisles. We really needed a little joke now and then because there wasn't one of us that wasn't absolutely scared silly of booby traps and the things we had to do with them.

Muldoon laughed us to scorn. "Fine bunch of perfumed granny dishes you are. What in the hell is there to be scared of? I've told you again and again that there are just three basic types of booby traps —the pull type, the push type, and the release type. If you know them, and I mean *know* them the way I do, nobody can fool you and you'll never get hurt unless," he smiled waggishly at us, "the guy who sets it is smarter than you are. And he's never going to be smarter than you are by the time you've graduated from Muldoon University."

He looked at us sternly. "The way to learn about booby traps is to work on them in the field and not try to get your information out of any blasted books. Today we're going to leave Seoul, not only because



GO CLIMB A WATERFALL

While some climbers grope for the peaks of the Rockies, the Alps and the Himalayas, there is a rare breed for whom tumbling waterfalls offer the utmost in challenge and fascination.

They belong to the IOOWC, probably the most exclusive and least known climbing association in the world—the International Order of Waterfall Climbers.

This group was started on the spur of the moment by a young soldier of fortune named Marshall Dickerson.

One hot August night in the 30's, Dickerson, who at the time was a reporter for the Washington, D. C., *Post,* was returning home with several friends from a dance in Virginia. They parked their cars beside a small stream under a full moon when someone suggested going for a dip.

The water wasn't deep enough for swimming but there was a 20-foot waterfall nearby, so they climbed that instead. Someone suggested that a waterfall-climbing club be formed. Dickerson took it seriously.

He went to Bolivia soon afterwards as a captain in the Bolivian Army in its war against Paraguay. After the war he climbed waterfalls in both Bolivia and Paraguay and still bigger ones in other parts of South America. He found other climbers who were equally interested in the daring and unusual sport.

Before he sailed from Chile to join the French Foreign Legion and be killed in World War II, several South American mountain-climbing clubs had taken up the waterfall-climbing idea.

It spread northward into Mexico where some of the members of the Club de Exploráciones Mexicano also became enthusiastic waterfall climbers. Now it reaches as far north as Alaska and as far south as New Zealand.

What's the fascination?

"Waterfall climbing offers the toughest possible type of climbing—wet, slippery rock," Luis Reyes of the Club de Exploraciones Mexicano said. "It requires all the nerve a human can summon, for even the roar of a high waterfall sounds menacing. When you can climb a waterfall you can climb anything."

—Emile C. Schurmacher

these Korean women are taking your minds off your lessons," Muldoon gave us a pornographic smirk, "but also because today we're going to get into the big time. We're going to do a little practicing on a real honest-to-God live mine field out near Yong Dong To. It's been untouched and roped off ever since the battle there—so all we have to do is go in and start the dirty work."

Before we had time to do more than exchange startled glances with each other, Muldoon herded us into a big truck and we were off. The thought of working on a real live, mine field got us right in the pits of our stomachs. We were gibbering like a bunch of apes. I put a cigarette in my mouth and damn near swallowed it twice before I got it lit.

The beginning of the mine field was on the edge of a broken down Korean village with little more than scrub bushes for scenery. Erected near one set of buildings were big wooden signboards in Korean, French, English, and Turkish:

EXTREME DANGER
LIVE MINE FIELD
KEEP AWAY! EXTREME DANGER

Muldoon gave us time to gawk at these for a while, and then he broke the ice by assembling a mine detector. His movements were slow and calculated, yet each piece was fitted into the next with great ease and confidence.

He teed off by showing us how to use it. He was deliberate and cautious as a wolf as he moved the disk slowly over a section of ground. Suddenly the needle gave a convulsive jerk, and I jerked with it. Something deadly and terrible lay there out of sight under the dirt. Muldoon put down the mine detector and started digging inch by inch. When he uncovered the naked fuse and started to unscrew it my veins contracted painfully around the ice water that was flowing through them.

Finally, with a triumphant gesture Muldoon held up the unscrewed fuse. He reached down and picked up the mine and threw it to one side. I damned near went into the ditch.

Muldoon quickly located another mine and went through the whole process of removing the fuse in exactly the same way. Then he stood up and pointed to me, of all people. "Okay, chum," he said genially, "you tell me what to do next, and *think.*"

That sounded easy enough. I thought for a while, but it's pretty tough to think with Muldoon around. Then I put a lot of confidence into my voice. "Pick it up," I said, "and throw it to one side like you did before."

Muldoon gave me a look of deep pity. Then he delicately lowered a loop of rope so that it was around the mine but not quite touching it. He motioned us to follow him, and we all moved off to a distance equal to the length of the rope, about 100 feet. Muldoon gave the rope a yank and there was a deafening explosion.

"The guy who set that mine was a smarter boy than you," Muldoon hissed into my dumbfounded face. "He planted two booby traps, one on top of the other. Even though I had the fuse out of the top one, if I'd of picked it up the movement would of set off the bottom one. See now?"

We were already a pretty white, scared looking bunch, but that was only the start. Muldoon knew all the tricks of the trade and every trick he showed us bleached our faces whiter.

Finally we got to a house on the edge of the field. It was surrounded by concrete machine gun emplacements. Muldoon hooted with joy. "The battle went over this section so fast that everything is still just the way the Chinese left it. I know damned well that house is booby-trapped." He rubbed his hands together gleefully. "Let's go in and start working on it."

We all walked cautiously around to the back, keeping our eyes glued on the house. Muldoon's first shout stopped us in our tracks. He was pointing to a wire hanging down from the roof along the side of the building. "There's a perfect trap for jugheads like you," he yelled.

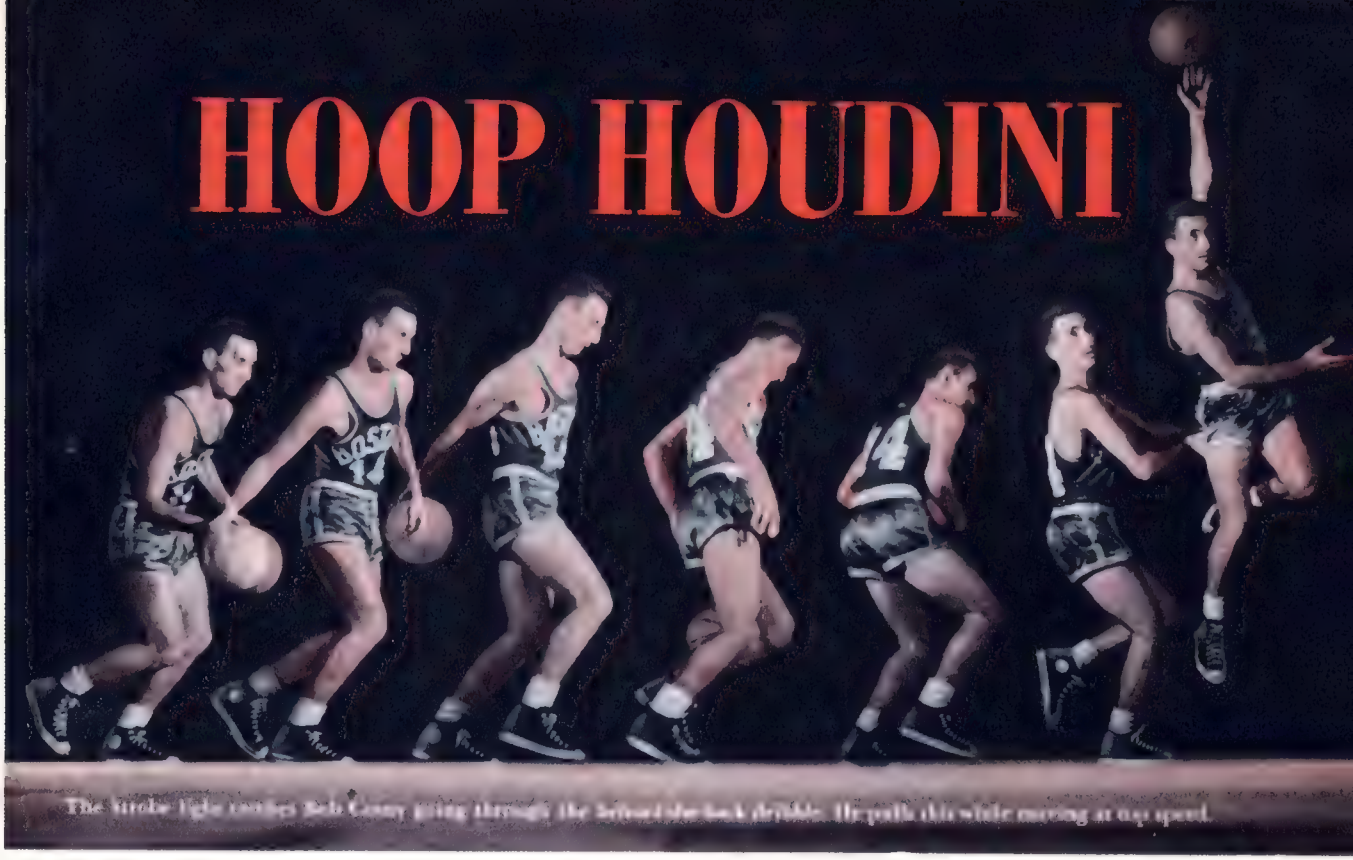
Then he turned around and gave us a little lecture. "Suppose you capture this layout and you see a wire hanging down like that. You don't bother to clean that up until you've done everything else. When the house is all cleaned up, everyone moves in and settles down. Finally some jughead decides to give the wire a yank, and the house and everyone in it gets blown sky high." Muldoon thrust his chin out at us. "Now, how would you children get rid of this booby trap?"

He shoved his fist through every suggestion we made, and glared at us with disapproval. "There's just one right way to do it," he explained at last. "First you yell to make sure you get everybody to hell out of the house, then you get yourself safely stashed away in that machine gun emplacement. Then you reach over with a long pole and give the wire a good pull."

It was plain to us that Muldoon had a magic sixth sense about booby traps. We all wished we had it too. Muldoon made us get back 150 feet while he got into the machine gun emplacement. He reached out with the long pole, hooked the wire, and jerked it. There was a bright orange flash and a thunderous roar as the mine went off.

After we recovered from the concussion enough to open our eyes, we looked sadly at each other. The house was still intact. The mine had exploded right under the machine gun emplacement. There was nothing there but a big, black, smoking hole. •

HOOP HOUDINI



The Celtics' Cousy goes through the behind-the-back dribble. He pulls this while moving at top speed.

Bob Cousy can do everything with a basketball but swallow it and there are guys in the pro ranks who'll swear he can do that too

by Paul Gardner

"He would make any team I ever played on." Joe Lapchick, coach of the New York Knickerbockers, was the speaker and he was talking about Bob Cousy, pride and joy of the Boston Celtics. This was high praise for Joe was a member of the original Celtics, still considered one of basketball's greatest teams. Another member of that club was a man whose name often comes up when Cousy is discussed—Nat Holman, coach at CCNY.

Cousy must be considered the latter-day Holman, although he competes in a tougher league than even the great Holman imagined. Monsters of six feet, 10 inches and seven feet parade around in basketball nowadays—gargantuans like the 250-pound George Mikan of the Minneapolis Lakers beats opponents black and blue merely by colliding with them. Yet, in this sort of company, the 6 feet, 2 inch, 175-pound Cousy, a Long Island Frenchman at home in Irish Boston, is one of the most valuable players operating today.

"Cousy does things with his hands nobody ever considered possible," declares his coach, caustic "Red" Auerbach of the Celtics who is not caustic as far as Cousy is concerned.

In fact, Cousy is so adroit with a basketball that Auerbach had to warn him to slow down so that he would not fool his own teammates. When Cousy first came to Boston four years ago—and the Celtics weren't high on the dazzling Holy Cross graduate—his coach would bench him every time he became too tricky with the ball.

Nothing as versatile as the poker-faced Cousy has been seen in basketball in more than a generation. If he isn't finishing high in scoring (third last season) he is far up in assists and playmaking. His stunt of dribbling behind his back is unique and yet is put on, not for show, but, for deadly purpose.

Cousy is such a ball-handler that in a game last year against Fort Wayne, within a half minute, he trooped through the opposition for a left-handed lay-up; took an opposition rebound from the backboard and flipped to Bob Donham who scored, and sank a right-handed set shot from 20 feet out.

Against Syracuse in the first round of the Eastern playoffs last season, in a game which went to four overtimes, the 25-year-old Cousy accounted for 50 points and registered the winning goal himself. Any wonder that last year, in 26 home games, the Celtics drew a record 200,000 people.

Basketball is now succeeding in Boston, whose first love has always been hockey, and most of the credit can be laid to Bob Cousy.

It required the agile magic of a Cousy to give basketball a fighting chance in Boston. One thing working against the Celtics was that they didn't give the fans a local hero. In fact they didn't even have a really top star. Many local college stars had tried their luck and hadn't fared too well

—stars like Tony Lavelli of Yale, Ed Leede of Dartmouth and George Kaftan, who had been one of the big aces at Holy Cross when Cousy was a freshman. Not until Cousy made good in pro ball, did the Celtics start to pull.

Oddly enough, in the beginning, it seemed as if Cousy would never get there. Some skeptics felt that he was too much of a show-off, razzle-dazzle type at Holy Cross and that the hard knocks of pro basketball would quickly pound him down to size. So no professional promoters really hammered at his door.

It was only through a maze of circumstances that Bob qualified for the Celtics. The Tri-Cities team, to whom he was first assigned, frowned on him. The Chicago Stags, which appeared to be his next port of call, folded. The Boston Celtics had originally drafted another man in preference to the ball-handling wizard from Holy Cross. Without venturing from Worcester, Cousy waited on tenterhooks to ascertain where he would finally land. He found out. It was 50 miles from Worcester and Holy Cross—in Boston.

Looking back now, it seems strange that Cousy's career at Holy Cross had not convinced more of the experts. In his senior year at the Cross, his team had created a record of 26 straight victories for major college clubs, a mark not bettered until Walter Dukes and Seton Hall attended to that detail.

But even as a freshman at college, Cousy had been tremendous. His team had triumphed for the National Collegiate Athletic Association title, then had proceeded to New Orleans to gain the Sugar Bowl honors.

It wasn't only Cousy's finesse which was in evidence at this time. His courage was unusual. "I saw him knocked cold at the Sugar Bowl," says Bob Curran, former Holy Cross captain and now head basketball coach at the University of Massachusetts. "Then he got up and scored 28 points."

Another time, Cousy jammed two fingers on his right hand. Despite this handicap, he tallied 28 and 22 points on another occasion in his next two games.

Curran, his old Holy Cross captain, has another incisive tip on Cousy. "I found out long ago," declares Curran, "and I guess the same thing happened with the Celtics that you must never give up on Cousy in a game. Suppose he wants to pass to you and he seems to be covered by an opponent like a blanket. Some players go by, relax and the first thing you know they are hit on the head. Always figure that Bob will get the ball to you somehow and you'll never be surprised."

This kind of skullduggery is something that most pros thought would apply to college but not in the present National Professional League. "It's a rough league," Cousy will tell you. "The Harlem Globetrotters, for instance, couldn't win a game in it. You can't train on exhibitions for the pro games."

However, Cousy excels in this fierce competition and he is quietly confident about his future. The top-notchers do not earn fortunes, either—Cousy's pay is about $15,000 and a percentage. And the average span of a basketball player's tenure is about five years.

"The reason they only last about five years," says Cousy, "is because there is so much running in today's game. The legs give out and when the legs give out, an athlete is through.

"Figure this out," he adds, "a tough college basketball schedule runs from 27 to 30 games. We have a schedule of 74 ball games, two more than last year. With exhibitions, we play about 100 games, starting in November with training and ending in April with the playoffs."

Travel for basketball players is a severe burden and has as much to do with the losses of teams on the road as the psychological factors of fans rooting vigorously for the home team.

"A pro basketball player lives in a suitcase on the road," says Cousy, "the baseball major league pro has time to sleep in the hotel, the basketball pro is in and out most of the time. Not only that but sleeping on a Pullman hurts the guys who are over six feet, six inches. They have to sleep curled up, if they sleep at all, and they can hardly be expected to be in the best condition by the time they reach the next town."

While Cousy observes that the pro basketball major leaguer lasts but five years on an average, he expects to be up there for at least 10 seasons. It is all part of his preconceived plan, a drive for the main objective which has never deserted him.

Cousy goes in to shoot and—zip, he passes off for a score. Note how the opposing players were fooled by the clever fake. A few years back Bob used to fool his own teammates.



This determination has been Bob Cousy's prime stock in trade all his life. For Cousy came up the real hard way. He was born in the Yorkville section on East End Avenue in New York City. The Cousys—his dad was a cab driver and is now a mechanic—moved to Long Island when Bob was eight, but he had seen enough and learned enough by then to realize that life was a rugged proposition.

Because Bob possesses the fastest pair of hands seen on a basketball court in our time, the tendency is to think that he was born with the knack which has established him as the leading attraction in basketball now that the tremendous Mikan is slowing up. Actually, most of the polished performance Bob is known for can be traced to hard work and guts.

Cousy, a natural athlete who knew his way around in baseball and sandlot football, first became interested in basketball when he was 14 years old.

He enjoyed two years on the varsity as his school, Andrew Jackson High of St. Albans, L. I., reached the quarter-finals of the Public Schools Athletic League championships one season, and the semi-finals the next. He was a good shot, but there was none of the versatility in his game which today makes him a terrific threat both as a playmaker and a scorer.

"I hadn't put too much stress on passing and dribbling in high school," says Cousy, "but I made up my mind to learn about them."

Four years—or rather summers—at that advanced school for basketball players, the Borscht Circuit, rounded out Cousy's skill. The Borscht Circuit consists of a number of

hotels in the Catskill Mountains in New York where the guests like basketball so much that the proprietors invite college hoopsters to "work" there in order to represent the hotel teams.

During this time, Cousy practised all the fine points he considered necessary for his college career. "Whatever I practised, I tried in a game," he declares, "that eventually gave me the confidence. I feel that you should use the points you pick up in practise, in competition, if you want to go ahead."

Cousy fooled around with his behind-the-back dribble in the Borscht Circuit but it wasn't until his junior year at Holy Cross that he demonstrated basketball's most sensational individualistic maneuver. It happened against Loyola of Chicago in Chicago and it won the game for the Cross.

Here's how Cousy himself describes the original exploit: "I had had a bad second half. We had control of the ball with thirty seconds or so to go and the instructions were for me to freeze the ball until, with about three seconds to go, I was to shoot. The Loyola guard had been overplaying me at the right so, when I finally made my move, I shifted the ball behind my back to my left hand, hooked it in and we won by that field goal."

Cousy accomplished the behind-the-back shift because, in keeping with his nature of facing up to every challenge, he felt that he needed it to stand out.

Bob is the only man in pro ball today who does it under fire. It's a tough maneuver for, as one may imagine, the player must have large fingers and sturdy, supple wrists.

"I have tried to teach it," says Cousy, "but I advise most boys not to even try it unless they have big hands."

Further, you have to slap the ball behind you in this play because if you cup it and sort of carry it behind your back, it is a violation. Deftness of the highest order is required for this trickery.

If this were all that Cousy demonstrated, it would be something, but it is only one of his many merits. He has flair, class, terrific speed, a remarkable eye, sense of pace, and the ability to accelerate when the tension is toughest. Moreover, he is always calculatingly cool. With all these things working for him, it would seem that Cousy's playing career is a cinch. But a man of six feet, two inches needs all these attributes in racehorse 1954 basketball when a chap of six feet, six inches is too small to play center.

Cousy knows that pleasing the crowd is the backbone of the game. When he scored his 50 points against Syracuse in that first-round play-off game last season, he wasn't so elated with his 50-point contribution as with the fact that Boston, as a result, progressed beyond the first round of the play-offs for the first time in its basketball history.

The dextrous Cousy is the outstanding attraction in basketball at the moment, both at home and abroad. The 200,000 the Celtics drew for 24 home games in Boston far exceeded the average figures that drove late lamented Boston Braves baseball team to Milwaukee. The Braves enticed just 281,000 fans in 77 home contests.

For a while last season there was a story around to the effect that Al McGuire of the New York Knickerbockers had Bob's number—that he could stop the Celtics' ace every time. When asked about it now, Bob laughs. "He's good and I'm glad they played it up," he says. "We sold out Madison Square Garden the last few times we were there. But about my never scoring against Al in high school they were right. I never played against him."

Another rumor that popped up occasionally was the one that said Cousy's teammates were jealous of his publicity and the honors he's been piling up every year. An expert close to the Boston scene ridiculed this. "Those fellows are playing the game for money," he said, "and Cousy's helped them make more money. When he had that big night against Syracuse, it pushed the club into the semi-finals and guaranteed two more games in New York. And those New York games mean money. So you can see the players have reason to like Bob."



A frustrated Bob Davies, All-Pro guard, finds a way to stop Cousy. Experts hesitated comparing Cousy to Davies until the Celtic met and got the better of the Rochester ace.

Bob has planned well for his playing career and like so many of today's professional athletes, has provided for the day when he won't be able to play at all. In the summer Bob runs a flourishing boys' camp in Pittsfield, New Hampshire. Last summer was one of the best Camp Graylag has enjoyed and boys came from as far away as Texas and Minnesota to take advantage of the facilities and also the chance to get some basketball tips from Bob.

Camp Graylag has been good to Bob financially and it has also been good physically. The summer before last he was bitten by the tennis bug and while it didn't help his weight-gaining plans, Cousy says, "It kept me in shape for my basketball. Many pro basketball players tend to get out of shape in the off season."

After three full seasons with the pros, Bob has definite ideas about "All" selections. He considers Dick McGuire of the Knickerbockers the finest playmaker; his teammate, Easy Ed McCauley, the leading all-around center; Jim Pollard of Minneapolis tops as a jump shot; Bobby Wanet of the Royals as able an all-around man as there is in the league; Bob Davies, also of the Royals, the foremost two-handed shot; Bill Scharman of the Celtics ace of the one-handers. George Mikan of the Lakers? Oh, well, he just thinks he's invincible.

"It's the weight that makes the difference with Mikan," Cousy explains. "six foot ten and weighs two hundred and fifty pounds. McCauley is six feet eight and weighs one-ninety. I've always said that between two inches and twenty pounds, I'll take the weight rather than the height. Many times I'll go up with a guy five-ten and a hundred and ninety-five and he'll throw his rear into me and knock me right out of the place."

Bob Cousy has had some good years in the National Basketball Association—he's been All-NBA twice and has finished third in scoring twice—but the experts agree that his best years are still in front of him. In fact, most of them expect this to be his greatest season—and some go so far as to say that he will be wearing George Mikan's Mr. Basketball title when the shooting's all over.

And why not? After all, he is a Hoop Houdini. •

TRUE ADVENTURE

DEAD MAN'S



PUBLISHED for the first time in a magazine, *Dead Man's Log* is a detailed, first person account of how the entire crew of a B-26 perished in the wilds of Labrador during World War II. Tragic to the bitter end, it is a classic example of man's inability to cope with nature when he lacks ingenuity.

The ill-fated bomber took off from Greenland for Goose Bay, Labrador, December 10, 1942. Faulty navigation and a low fuel supply forced the pilot to crash-land the ship some 300 miles north of Goose Bay, near Hebron, a small Eskimo village. No one was hurt during the landing. The men made a tarp shelter, rationed their food, then tried to radio distress signals. When this failed, three of them set out for help in the bomber's life boat. They were never heard of again.

For over a month the rest of the crew did little more than sit and wait for the rescue plane that was never to appear. About three weeks after the last man died, Eskimos from Hebron, only an hour and a half away by foot, discovered the men. They had starved.

They died because they expected that other men would save them, rather than relying on their own ability to save themselves. To prevent other crash victims from the same tragic end, the USAF and RCAF make cold weather and tropical survival schools a must for all fliers. And *Dead Man's Log* has become a grim but valuable text in these schools.

LOG



"Late in the afternoon we made a fire out of gas and oil. Morris worked on the put-put without results. That night we cranked the dinghy radio."

Illustrated by

Gurney Miller

Written by a pilot, this grim account of death by starvation became a classic of the North

DECEMBER 10TH Took off for Goose Bay at last. About 1:15 we ran into some clouds. We found an opening to the SW at about 2,000 feet, and after flying in that direction, we broke out. We finally had to go back up to 13,000, but it was clear sailing, so we kept on. Lieut. Walters gave me a heading to get back on course, but we know now that it was too big a correction. About half way, I picked up the Goose Bay beam, but the set went dead after a few minutes. It was too late to turn back then, so we kept trying to get it on the compass and the two liaison sets, but couldn't. We finally hit the coast, and decided we were south of Goose Bay, so we turned north. When we finally realized we were north, we were almost out of gas. As we turned around, I started looking for a place to land. I wanted to get back where there were trees, but the engine started missing, so we came on down. The crew never batted an eye when they were told we were going to make a crash landing. Even if I do say so myself, it was a good landing, and Lieut. Fritz did a good job of cutting the switch. We hit a rock that tore the bombay open, and one prop tip went through the fuselage right behind me, but outside of that the ship was intact. It swung around almost 90 degrees without stopping, and the fuselage made a good windbreak that way. (Hit 1855 GMT). It was almost dark, so after eating a cold ration, we went to bed in the ship. We had 17 blankets, a comforter and a bed roll, but we were still cold and couldn't stretch out either. None of us slept very well. I spent the night figuring out where we were. Lieut. Walters took a star shot, and we compared notes and decided we were about 300 miles north of Goose Bay at about 58 degrees latitude.

DECEMBER 11TH Lieut. Walters walked to the fiord on the west, and Leadley to the one on the east. We spent most of the day cleaning up the ship and pooling all the food. In the afternoon Lieut. Fritz and I climbed the mountain in front of us, but didn't learn much. Morris worked on the put-put all day without results. Late in the afternoon we made a fire out of gas and oil in a tin can. That night, as on the 10th, we cranked the dinghy radio. It was pretty windy, so we spent the night in the ship, but still didn't do much sleeping.

DECEMBER 12TH Made three big improvements in our situation. Lieut. Fritz and Leadley discovered a lake close to the ship and saw a fox. Shull and I saw about 50 seals. In the fiord we saw wolf or fox. We know that there is food here. We made a lean-to out of tarps under the wing in the toe of the ship, and we slept out there. It was much better, but still not very satisfying. Before going to bed, we cranked the radio again, and Lieut. Walters took some more star shots.

DECEMBER 13TH (Sunday) When the star shots were figured out, it showed us to be at 58 degrees, 12 minutes, close to the town of Hebron. Worked on the put-put all day with no success, so we tried to work the liaison set on the batteries. They were too weak. Then we pooled our covers and all slept together in the lean-to.

DECEMBER 14TH Wind blew all day with increasing velocity and snow. Our lake went dry, so we had to go back to melting snow. We went to bed early.

DECEMBER 15TH Didn't get up till noon because the wind was blowing. Our breakfast consisted of nine cups of coffee and a package of fig newtons. The weather was very discouraging all day, but late in the afternoon, Morris pulled the put-put through a couple of times and it caught. It didn't put out but five volts, still we were encouraged. We ate a fairly big supper and went to bed early.

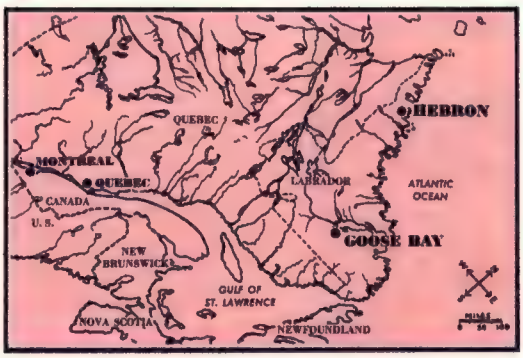
DECEMBER 16TH Had a cold breakfast (chocolate bars and caramels) because the wind blew too much snow into our fire. Lieutenants Fritz and Walters went fishing without any luck. Morris changed voltage regulators and got 26 volts, long enough for me to pick up a couple of stations on the liaison receiver. The put-put stopped suddenly, but we hope we know what is wrong with it, so we may be able to get a message out soon.

DECEMBER 17TH The put-put out, but we couldn't get the voltage up to the front. Must be a short somewhere. We tried to send on the command on HC batteries, but they were too dead.

DECEMBER 18TH Had high winds all night and plenty of snow blew in. We didn't get up until noon, and as soon as we could get the place cleaned up we went back to bed. Too windy to do anything.

DECEMBER 19TH More snow last night. Morris and Shields tried to work on the put-put but it was too cold. We built a fire in the lean-to and thawed out.

DECEMBER 20TH It was so windy we stayed in bed all day.



Crash landing took place near Hebron (upper right). Goose Bay Air Force base is about 300 miles south.

DECEMBER 21ST Everything was really snowed in, so we spent the day eating, thawing out blankets, and planning the trip south. Lieut. Walters, Lieut. Fritz, and Sgt. Morris planned to head south in the boat the first clear day.

DECEMBER 22ND Had a perfect day, the first clear, calm day in over a week. We worked on the boat and cleared snow away from the lean-to all day. We ate a pretty big meal (a can of spam and two K-rations), with the three boatmen eating a little extra.

DECEMBER 23RD Got up at 7:15, got the boat ready, and started carrying it. The wind was pretty strong, and the boat was heavy, so we had a pretty hard time of it. We didn't get to the water until noon, and then it took quite a while to find a launching place. We never did find a good one, but the boat was finally launched about 1:30. The wind was pretty strong. We intended to push them off shore, but they (Lieut. Fritz, Lieut. Walters, and Sgt. Morris) appeared to be making some headway to the south the last time we saw them. We had a hard time of coming back against the snow. We ate some peanuts and a caramel and went to bed.

DECEMBER 24TH Christmas Eve, and we've been here two weeks today. It was lonesome here with just the four of us, but we got up pretty early and dug out the gas strainer so we could make a fire. It was so windy we couldn't work outside, so we dried out blankets, etc., inside. Leadley had a badly blistered and swollen hand which had to be doctored. We stretched out our eating to cover most of the day. We had a sardine-sized can of kippered herring with crackers, a spoonful of peanuts each, a black cough drop, a caramel, a cup of bouillon, a cup of grape drink, and plenty of coffee, using the same grounds over and over. It's really surprising how much pleasure one can get from a small thing like a caramel. We look forward to it with anticipation every day.

DECEMBER 25TH What a Christmas. Shields' feet pained him so much that we had to get up at 3:00. He was in agony before that, but was better after it, although his arches still pain pretty badly. Got up again at 9:00. Leadley went exploring. I massaged Shields' feet and Shull started fixing up the floor which was in pretty bad condition from the fire. Later, we had to dig out the rear entrance to the ship to fix the window up. After that, we had a first aid session. I'm the only one who doesn't have anything wrong. Leadley has a swollen hand, two blistered fingers. Shields has two sprained arches, and Shull has a few blisters on his hand. We are about to eat our Christmas dinner and then go to bed.

DECEMBER 26TH Had another swell day. The weather was perfect. Shull cleaned up the back of the ship while Leadley dug around in the rear of the bombay, uncovering a can of fruit cocktail and a can of chicken a la king. I worked on Shields' feet and did some odd jobs. Everyone is feeling better, and I hope that Shields will be up in a few days. We aren't starving by any means, but the conversations are mostly about food. You surely can remember some good tasting things.

DECEMBER 27TH Started today as usual by treating the casualties. Shields' feet were better, but we found a big blister on each foot. Leadley is losing the skin on one finger, including the nail. Leadley and Shields spent the day drying blankets; Shull finished cleaning out the back of the ship; and I climbed the mountain to see if I could see anything out to sea. I also took a roll of film. The weather has been perfect with the barometer reading 30.45 for more than 24 hours, but it started going down this afternoon and the wind is trying to kick up. I hope the weather stays good because we still have plenty of work to do. The enforced diet is beginning to tell on us, but we will eat a little more tomorrow. Shull spilled some coffee in the fire. It exploded and burned the underside of the aileron off.

DECEMBER 28TH This has been a terrible day. The wind started up early in the morning and kept us inside all day. We had two fires which took the rest of the day to repair. Shields' feet are quite a bit better. As soon as he can, he and Shull will start working on the put-put again. We may be able to get that liaison set going yet. In the meantime, we can feel the effects of the short rations more every day. We pray almost constantly that the boys in the boat will get through and get help soon.

DECEMBER 29TH Today has been just about average. The wind has been blowing, but not too much. Shields' feet are almost back to normal size now. He and Shull started to work on the put-put and may have found the trouble. We'll know in a few days. Today's eating consisted of four pieces of hard candy, and three dates each, a can of chicken a la king, a soda cracker, a tablespoon of peanuts, coffee, and a cupful of lemon extract.

DECEMBER 30TH Today was overcast with snow

showers. Spent most of the day working on invalids. Leadley lost one fingernail, and may lose another. I'm just thankful that his hand doesn't pain him. Worked a little on the put-put and made some progress, but it was too dark to work much. Got up a game of 500 rummy which everyone seemed to enjoy. Had a delicious meal of a can of mushy apple juice and a can of tomato juice, of which we made a good soup by adding cracker juice. The boys have been gone a week today. God grant that they still are going strong.

DECEMBER 31ST Today has been overcast with occasional light snow. (Barometer 30.3). But we had an enjoyable bull session about food, and got quite a bit done on the put-put. Shields put on a pair of shoes for the first time in a week, but his feet are still weak. Leadley's hand is improving. The gas gave out on this side, so we had to start digging out the other side. I hope we can figure out how to transfer the gas to this side, but will have to wait until tomorrow to see. Meanwhile we will eat an early supper and get to bed to save gas.

JANUARY 1ST Happy New Year. It snowed and blew all night, and kept it up all day, so, since we didn't have any fire and couldn't do any work, we stayed in bed. Our meal consisted of half a box of chocolates since we couldn't heat anything. We didn't have anything to drink, so we didn't feel very good.

JANUARY 2ND More wind and snow all night. It slackened up a little around noon, so we got up with the aid of a fire in a peanut can. Shull got the prop anti-deicer out with about a gallon of alcohol and glycerine, and I dug out the oil drain. After that, we had a couple of small hot fires and made plenty of hot coffee and had a lemon powder and a cup of bouillon. Our main dish was the last can of date nut roll with jelly, and it was very good. We didn't finish with the eating and drinking coffee until almost 6:00. The boys have been gone 10 days today, which is the time we figured it would take them to make the trip. We are praying that they made it all right, and can bring help soon.



Eskimos from Hebron found the crashed plane and remainder of its dead crew about three weeks too late.

JANUARY 3RD There wasn't much wind last night, so we thought that we would have a good day, but the wind picked up and it snowed all day. The ship has a sheet of ice on it, and is covered with snow. Besides that, the drifts around the ship are higher and closer than they have ever been before. We hooked up the hand fuel transfer pump, and I am positive we pumped some gas over to this side, but we couldn't get it out, so we had to use the alcohol to cook with. I got in too big a hurry once, and caused a fire in which I burned my hand, but not too badly. Now we are all wearing bandages. I found two bouillon powders in the radio operator's desk. Spent a lot of time putting snow under our bed. It must be raining outside now, because this plane is leaking all over, and we have only a small fire, so it couldn't be melting ice on the wing. We keep praying for clear weather, and the hope that the boys got through —also to try out a new theory as to the location of the town of Hebron.

JANUARY 4TH Had blue sky when we got up, but it stayed overcast all day. There wasn't much wind, however, so we were able to work pretty well. Shull and I got quite a bit of gas out of the other wing, so we are pretty well fixed on that. Shields has the put-put almost ready to try again. We are just praying for good weather, both in the hopes of a rescue plane (if the boys got through), and to try out our theory as to the location of Hebron. Meanwhile, I am cutting down still more on the rations. We would already have starved, if we didn't have plenty of coffee. Finished everything we could do early tonight, so played another game of 500 rummy, which Shields won.

JANUARY 5TH It started off like a beautiful day, but turned to a light low overcast. Shull and I cleaned the plane of snow, and finished the put-put, which seemed to be in pretty good condition. It started clearing up in the late afternoon. Played another game of 500 which Shull won.

JANUARY 6TH This is the eighth successive day of bad weather, and it has been two weeks since the boys left. The wind was worse last night and today than it has ever been before. We are plenty snug in here, but the entrance is almost full, and it doesn't do any good to dig out. We stayed in bed until noon, because it was impossible to do anything. Played hearts for a change—Shields won. We each had one cough drop, three and a half dates, about a level spoonful of peanuts, and some coffee. That's pretty poor eating for a whole day, but the boys are really taking it swell.

JANUARY 7TH We've been here four weeks today. The entrance was blocked up this morning. As I was going in the ship I heard a noise and saw a little bird. We caught him, boiled him for a couple of hours, then made a stew by adding a bouillon powder—it was really delicious. Leadley started to go looking for Hebron, but the snow was too soft. Shields got outside for the first time in 13 days. If we can't find a town, or get the put-put going in three days, all we can do is wait for the weather to clear, and pray that the boys got through, because we will be too low on food to do anything else. God help us to find some way of getting out of here safely.

JANUARY 8TH Today was the most strenuous for me since we got here. I tried to get to Hebron, and still think I know where it is, but there are two mountains in the way. I can feel myself growing weaker, and we have less to eat every day. I don't know what we would do if we hadn't the three pounds of coffee. We sit around and drink that, and talk about all kinds of food, but I think we all crave chocolate candy more than anything else. The boys dug out the back of the ship, so if tomorrow is clear, we will have one last try with the put-put and the radio.

JANUARY 9TH Well, we got the put-put back in place, but it jammed again, so that leaves us with one possibility—that the boys got through. We had a perfect day here today, but are hoping that the boys are at Goose and the weather was that bad there, too. We don't have more food than for one good meal, but we are going to stretch it for six days. The boys here were down in the dumps today when the second of our three chances fizzled out in two days. But they seemed to have snapped out of it pretty well. Shields dried the blankets and made the bed.

JANUARY 10TH We've been here one month today —31 days. Spent most of the day, which was perfect as far as the weather was concerned, looking for the plane and fixing up bandages. The boys' [*Continued on page* 44]

Beware of "Male Trouble"

A small, exclusively masculine lump of tissue about the size of a horse chestnut holds the key to happiness or misery, strength or weakness for one out of three males over the age of 30. This little organ, known as the prostate gland, maintains a secret veto power over our ability to stay alive as well as to enjoy what life we do possess.

When the prostate works right, it helps to keep you healthy and sexually competent. But when it misbehaves—and this happens with alarming frequency—it may cause any one of a dozen minor and major disorders. It is the number one cause of cancer in the male, and can literally choke off a man's potency, rob him of the ability to become a father, and turn him old before his time.

Yet this all-important gland, which should rank in any man's mind with his testicles or his thyroid, is probably the most underrated and misunderstood organ of the male body. Ignorance of the prostate is so overwhelming that most men don't even know they have one; others talk about the gland as if it were a mysterious sickness of old age.

Knowledge of a few simple facts about the prostate can save lives, thousands of them. It can also prevent chronic or prolonged misery for vast numbers of men who, because of ignorance and neglect, allow a minor ailment to develop into painful and sometimes dangerous "male trouble."

There are three main types of prostate disorder: prostatitis, or inflammation of the gland; enlargement (doctors call it "benign hypertrophy"); and cancer.

The warning signals for all three are quite similar, although in the early stages the symptoms may be so mild that they are ignored until serious damage to the bladder and urethra has occurred. A first sign is increased desire to urinate, especially at night. If enlargement has taken place, the urge to pass water will not be satisfied. The stream will be weak or dribbling, and often there is the uncomfortable feeling of not being able to empty the bladder completely. Another common symptom is an intense burning sensation in the crotch, and pain around the rectum. A sudden decrease of sexual responsiveness and loss of virility may also mean an ailing prostate.

Every day doctors shake their heads and give the same reply to hundreds of newfound prostate sufferers: "If only you had come to me sooner!"

One reason for such late discoveries, aside from general ignorance, is the fact that prostate trouble is devilishly deceptive. Often the victim will not know he has it, or will think he has some other ailment. He may complain of backache, an upset stomach, arthritis, pains in the chest or simply of feeling tired and run down—conditions seldom reported promptly to a physician. Even doctors are sometimes fooled by this tricky little gland, and only a thorough examination will reveal that the suspected "ulcer," "heart condition" or "rheumatism" is actually prostatic trouble.

Because so many cases go undiagnosed, there is no accurate count of the number of prostate disorders in the United States. But the figures run high. According to one authoritative estimate, almost 50 per cent of all men over 40 suffer from benign, or non-cancerous tumors of the prostate. No one knows just how many are victimized by prostate cancer, but guesses are from 5 to 10 million.

A quick glance at a biological road map will help explain how one little gland can be such a troublemaker. The prostate is a doughnut-shaped mass of tissue that encircles the neck of the bladder and covers the upper part of the urethra—the urine duct leading from the bladder out through the penis. Because of its position, the gland is always a potential hazard.

If it becomes inflamed or enlarged, it will exert a clamp-like grip on the urethra and will partially or totally obstruct water elimination. Without water elimination life stops. Complete blockage of the duct will cause the urine to back up and clog the kidneys; body wastes, instead of being filtered out, will collect in the blood and tissues and produce a dangerous condition known as uremia. In most cases, fortunately, this trouble can be spotted long before serious obstruction has occurred.

The healthy prostate gland does not control urination. It is first and foremost a sex organ, part of that intricate system of glands and hormones which controls a man's capacity for fatherhood.

The chief function of the prostate is to produce a mucus-like fluid which nourishes and helps transport the sperm cells, or male fertilizing agents. This fluid is produced and stored in tiny chambers inside the gland; when sexual stimulation takes place, the chambers fill up and, at the moment of ejaculation, are emptied into the urethra by contraction of the prostatic muscles. Obstruction of the urethra due to enlargement of the prostate interferes with this delicate timing process and is a frequent cause of male sterility.

The common worry that prostate surgery means loss of manhood, is justified in only a small number of extreme cases where life itself may be at stake. Usually, enough healthy gland tissue is left to continue secretions, and normal virility is not affected, although a temporary rest from sexual activity may be necessary after the operation.

Questionnaires circulated among thousands of prostate surgery patients show that for the vast majority, sexual activity after recovery was not lowered. One patient from West Virginia wrote in, "The only difference between now and before the operation is that the sexual act takes longer, but I don't begrudge a minute of the time."

A few medical men maintain that improper sexual habits may damage the prostate. Continuous arousal without ejaculation, they say, causes the gland to become congested with seminal fluid, resulting in painful inflammation. Most specialists, however, find little evidence to support this belief.

The widespread notion that prostate trouble begins only in old age, or after the middle years, has little basis in fact. Inflammation of the gland can take place any time after

One out of three men over 30 have it. Its cause: the tricky prostate gland that can make you miserable, rob you of your virility

by Eric Northrup

adolescence. It is usually caused by a bacterial infection which may first announce itself by backache or pain in the thighs or scrotum. Gonorrhea germs from a recently "cured" venereal ailment are often discovered to be the cause, but at least a dozen other microscopic "bugs," by producing infection elsewhere in the body, may cause a painful abscess in the gland. On the other hand, an infected prostate may bring on such complications as bursitis, rheumatic pains, and eye inflammations.

Except in rare cases, prostatitis is treated successfully without surgery. Rectal massages, sometimes combined with doses of antibiotics, are generally effective in relieving and ultimately curing the infection. By exerting finger pressure directly on the gland which can be felt through the rectal canal, the doctor can gradually empty the prostatic ducts of accumulated pus. Although this treatment can be painful, it usually provides relief after a week or two of massages. Most cases require about a dozen treatments.

Enlargement of the prostate, like cancer and the common cold, is a puzzler that still mystifies medical men. No one knows just why the gland, after a normal existence of 15 years or more of adult life, suddenly begins to expand. Medical men do know that this happens most frequently as the years advance; half the men in their fifties, 60 per cent of those past age 60, and 70 per cent of those past age 70, suffer with enlargement of the prostate. This leads doctors to suspect that the male sex hormone—which radically affects the aging process—may be involved.

Another clue in this direction is the fact that eunuchs, men who have been castrated, never worry about prostate trouble. Those who lose their testes before puberty simply fail to develop the gland; in those castrated after puberty the prostate shrinks to utter uselessness. As informative as this may appear, most researchers feel that many other factors remain to be discovered before the mystery of prostate enlargement can be solved.

When the doughnut gland begins to grow, it tightens its grip on the urethra, narrowing the channel and inflating the bladder with unexpelled urine. Stale waste products, caught in the muscle folds inside the bladder, become a source of infection and the increased water pressure can eventually cause a rupture.

Fortunately, enlargement of the prostate is usually a slow process that only becomes dangerous in its later stages. In many cases a slight swelling of the gland may persist for years, causing nothing more than mild discomfort. But once continued growth is detected, the only cure for this type of prostate disorder is removal.

Fear of surgery and of doctors has led hundreds of men to keep secret or pooh-pooh their symptoms, often at the cost of foreshortened or cruelly aggravated lives. This is especially true of ailments in the lower abdomen.

Prostate surgery has made such remarkable advances during the past few years that there is no longer reason to humor these fears. A number of effective and relatively painless operations have been developed. The gland can be removed through the bladder, via an incision in the lower abdomen, through the crotch area between the penis and the rectum; or by an ingenious electro-surgical technique that extracts the prostate bit by bit from the urinary passage without making any incisions.

The most widely used operation is a lengthy and formidable two-step affair. The abdomen is opened and a rubber tube inserted through an incision into the bladder, where it is kept as a urinal drain for a week or two, depending on the extent of the disorder. This tube acts as a substitute urethra, permitting the kidneys to function normally and giving the doctors time to clear up any infections before removing the prostate. After a week or two of drainage, the tube is withdrawn, the gland worked loose—without any cutting—and extracted through the original incision in the bladder. This operation has become routine.

When enlargement of the prostate is not too advanced and there is no sign of infection, the gland can be removed directly through the penis by a remarkable trick of twentieth century surgery. The gadget used for this amazing operation is called a *resectoscope*. Twelve inches long and no more than a half inch in diameter, it contains a minute system of mirrors, lenses and an electric light bulb the size of a barley seed for viewing the interior of the bladder. It also has valves that shoot water in and out of the urinary tract and a loop of steel wire that cuts by electricity.

The instrument is inserted into the penis and up through the urethra to the bladder, a valve releases distilled water which fills the bladder, and the surgeon adjusts the resectoscope until he gets a clear view of the enlarged prostate through the eyepiece. By manipulating a control lever at his fingertips, he guides the wire loop in tiny delicate strokes to trim away the infected tissue piece by piece. This is done until most of the gland has been removed.

Fifteen years ago cancer of the prostate meant a long period of suffering followed by certain death. Today, such cases are being cured successfully. Doctors agree that perhaps 50 per cent of all prostate cancer sufferers could be saved if men would report their conditions early enough. A variety of new techniques is being thrown at this malignant man-killer, some with excellent results.

One of the most recent is the use of radioactive gold, combined with wonder drugs and injected directly into the gland. Researchers at the University of Iowa Medical School report that radioactive gold is less injurious to the tissues than X-rays or radium treatment. Of 160 prostate cancer sufferers given the gold shots two years ago, 50 per cent today are free of all cancer symptoms.

Cortisone, the potent man-made hormone that duplicates the product of our adrenal glands, has been used successfully in some cases to eliminate the need for surgery.

For several years, advanced [*Continued on page* 48]



Louis Mattar's dream car and trailer are hooked up and almost ready to go. The owner checks the shower he rigged up by running a pipe through the fender.

Gadgeteer's Dream Car

When a friend observed that Louis Mattar's car had everything but the kitchen sink in it, Louis put in a kitchen sink. And that's just one of the $111,000 worth of extras in the fabulous Cadillac

by Sven-Ake Nielsen

Out in San Diego, California, there's a man named Louis Mattar who owns the most fabulous car in the world. Mattar's 1947 Cadillac is equipped with, among other things, a built-in shower, hot and cold running water, a kitchen sink, washing machine, electric iron, toilet, automatic bar, drinking fountain, dining table, refrigerator, dual-speaker public-address system, fold-away beds, and medicine chest.

To create this wonder, Mattar has spent more than $37,000 on materials as well as untold hours of labor. Counting the time involved Mattar figures his investment to be in the neighborhood of $111,000.

Of all the amazing features about the fantastic car, perhaps the most amazing is the way it all began. Louis used to own a La Salle that boasted a built-in bar. When he purchased the Cadillac—over seven years ago—and began to take it on fishing trips, he moved the bar from the La Salle to the Caddy. A buddy kiddingly asked when the running water was coming in. The next trip found the running water installed. To get the hot water, Mattar had run thin copper tubing around the manifold. A three-gallon tank set under the hood and near the engine kept the water hot.

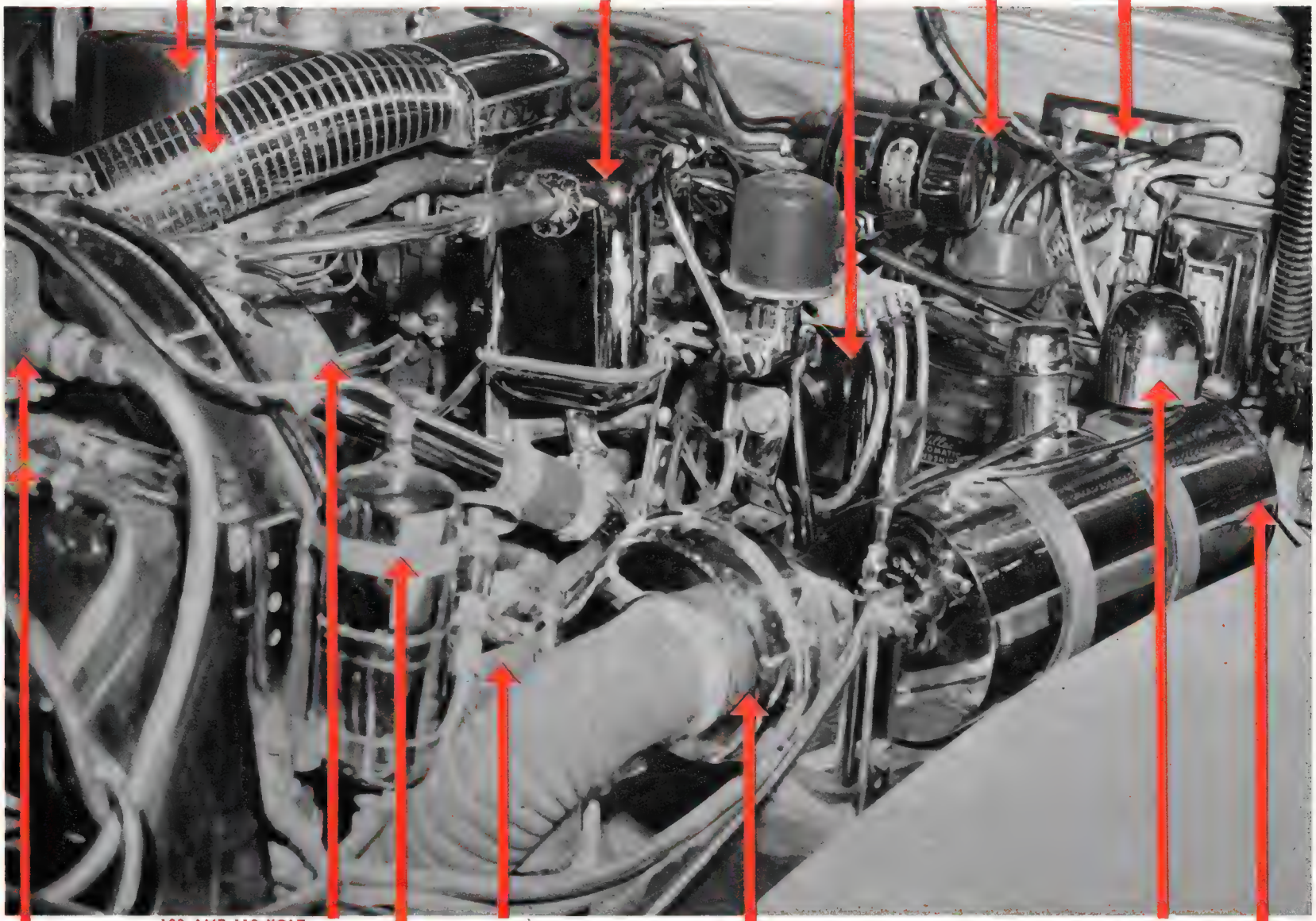
The next convenience was a shower brought about by running a pipe up through the fender. After this came a tape recorder to offset poor radio reception in the mountains. The recorder plays through a public address system.

Next came the built-in mirror placed next to an outlet for an electric razor, a small washing machine and an electric iron. Each of these conveniences was built into the body of the car so it would be available when needed, yet out of sight when not in use. For electricity the intrepid Mattar installed four inverters to step his current up from six to 110 volts. Later he put in a 110-volt generator and placed four submarine-type batteries under the framework.

Now the flood had started. All someone had to do was mention a missing item and—boom, it was in. When a friend said, "You've got everything in that car but the kitchen sink," Louis immediately installed a kitchen sink.

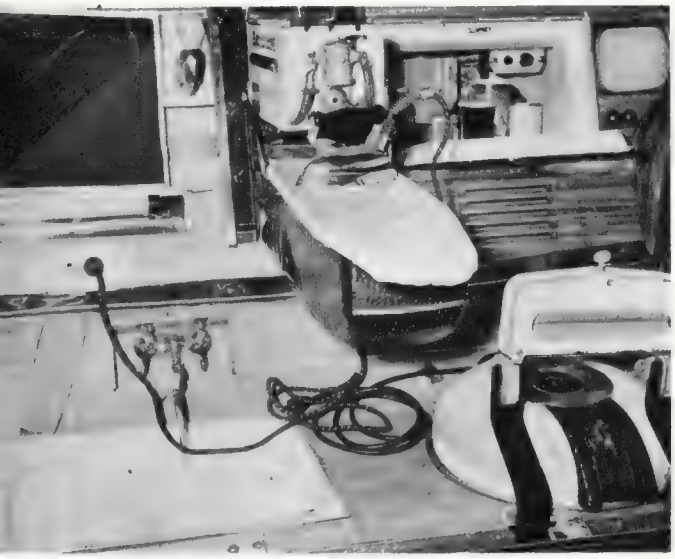
The sink was quickly followed by an electric barbecue stove. Now people started to talk about the time and money Mattar was "wasting." They stopped talking when the big offers started to roll in. One would-be buyer offered $100,000 just to get negotiations going. A maharajah cabled from India asking that Mattar re-equip his fleet of Caddies.

But Mattar wasn't open to offers. He was too busy planning a pet project, a long-distance non-stop driving record. The project called for him to drive from San Diego to New York and back without making a single stop.


AIR CLEANER TUBE
HOT WATER TANK
RADIATOR WATER LEVEL STABILIZER
100 AMP RECTIFIER
DUAL COILS
BATTERY CHARGING FROM
100 AMP GENERATOR
100 AMP 110 VOLT
GENERATOR
RADIATOR PRESSURE RELEASE VALVE
VALVES FOR WATER COOLING ENGINE OIL, TIRES, BRAKES
VAPOR LOCK PREVENTOR
BLOWER FOR AIR AND WATER SPRAY
INJECTOR ADJUSTMENT VALVE
WATER AND ALCOHOL INJECTOR FOR CARBURETOR



Mattar's versatile trailer boasts a patio complete with cocktail table and phone connecting to the driver's seat. The car phone handles both local and long-distance calls.



The Cadillac's rear seat cushions come off and reveal the comforts of home—washing facilities, electric iron, electric stove, refrigerator, a washing machine and a television set.

It's dinner time and Mattar and his wife man the electric stove that assures the Caddy's riders of hot meals during trips. The stove pulls out from the back of the rear seat.



By the time he was ready to start, Mattar's car was a miracle of ingenuity. Beneath the hood was a maze of cables, pipes and pumps. Most of this maze represented dual systems. Mattar had insured himself against most mechanical failures by resorting to duplication. For example, a switch on his dashboard would put a second fuel pump into operation when the first pump showed signs of failing. And this was but one of many controls placed on the dashboard to take care of and check functional failures.

The trailer which he designed to accompany the car on its trips carries more than 200 gallons of gasoline in 50-gallon drums, 15 gallons of oil and 30 gallons of water. These fluids are automatically fed to the engine and the trailer itself is replenished by trucks which drive alongside while the machine is in motion.

The trailer also contains a built-in tool compartment which is almost a complete machine shop in miniature. A dashboard switch controls retractable catwalks that slide out making it possible to walk from the trailer to a spot in front of the hood without stopping.

Actually, in this fantastic car it is rarely necessary to make a personal check on engine conditions. The dashboard is cluttered with gauges, temperature and pressure controls, which indicate any failures. There is, for instance, a fluid level indicator for oil which makes it unnecessary to ever check the oil stick. Differential, master brake cylinder and radiator fluids are similarly checked from the front seat.

Mattar has also devised an anti-blowout system which is being considered by Detroit manufacturers as a safety innovation in the passenger cars of the future. He has drilled holes through the axles and through these has installed water and air lines. Thus cold water can be sprayed on tires to offset overheating on hot desert roads. Should a tire pick up a nail along the way, an automatic air pump keeps up a steady flow to maintain a specified pressure.

Thanks to splendid cooperation from officials throughout the country, superb driving by Mattar and his co-drivers and luck, the round trip from San Diego to New York City was completed *in seven days*. Most of the credit goes to Mattar's skill and imagination.

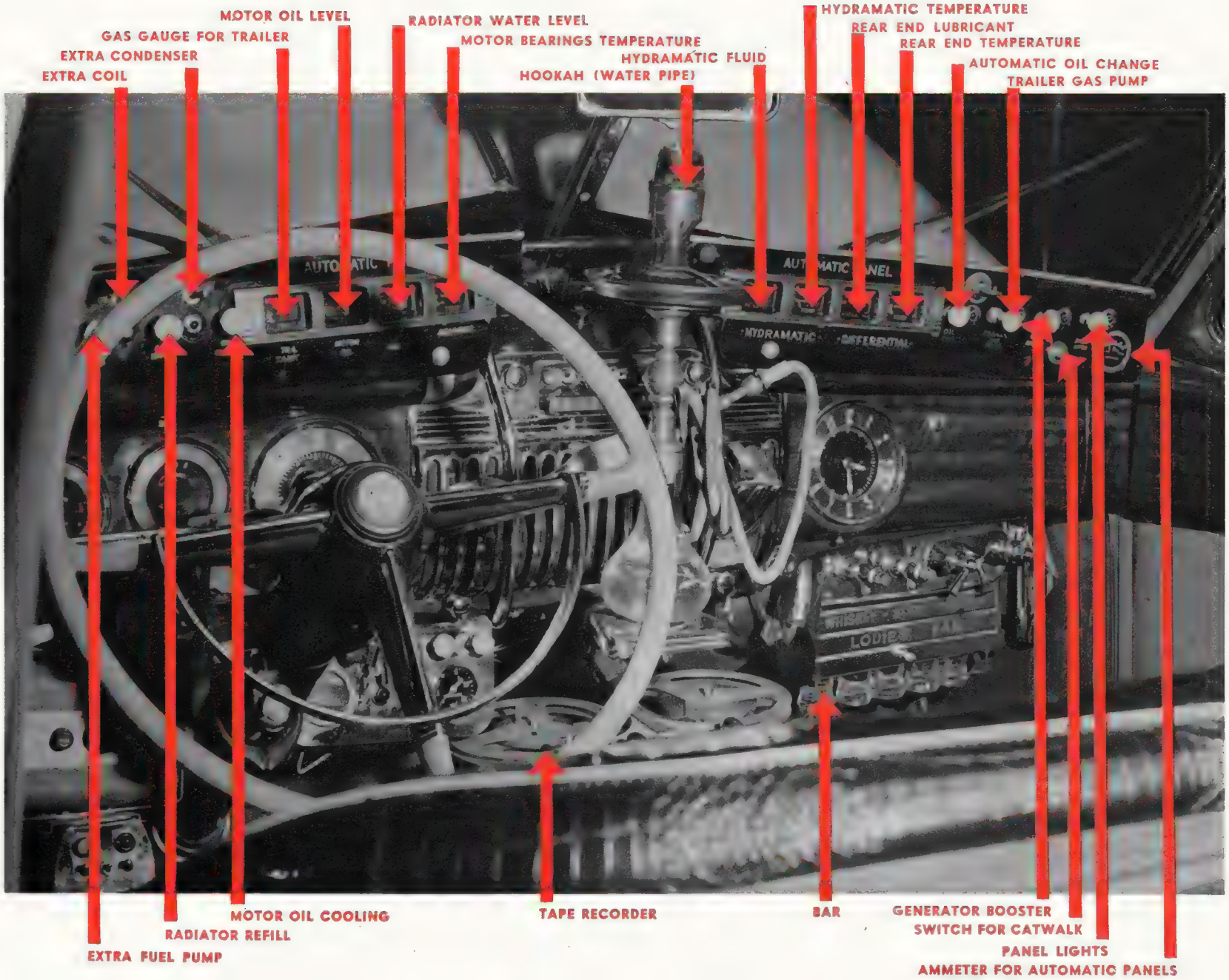
A typical example of how Mattar's ingenuity saved the day happened just outside of Omaha. The engine began to sound rough and Mattar switched on an emergency condenser. A moment later the radiator gauge began to fall and the oil indicator rose. At once Mattar realized that the worst possible thing had occurred. He had a crack in his block and water was leaking from the radiator into his crankcase. Without the oil level indicator he would never have known until too late.

He pressed a button and the retractable catwalks shot out. A moment later he was back on the trailer getting a tube of soluble cement. Then he went up and lifted the hood while the car was still in motion and poured the solution into the radiator. Then he pushed in a dashboard control which automatically drained the used and diluted oil from the crankcase and pumped it into a surplus tank in the trailer. A second control replaced the crankcase oil. Another control refilled the radiator with fresh water.

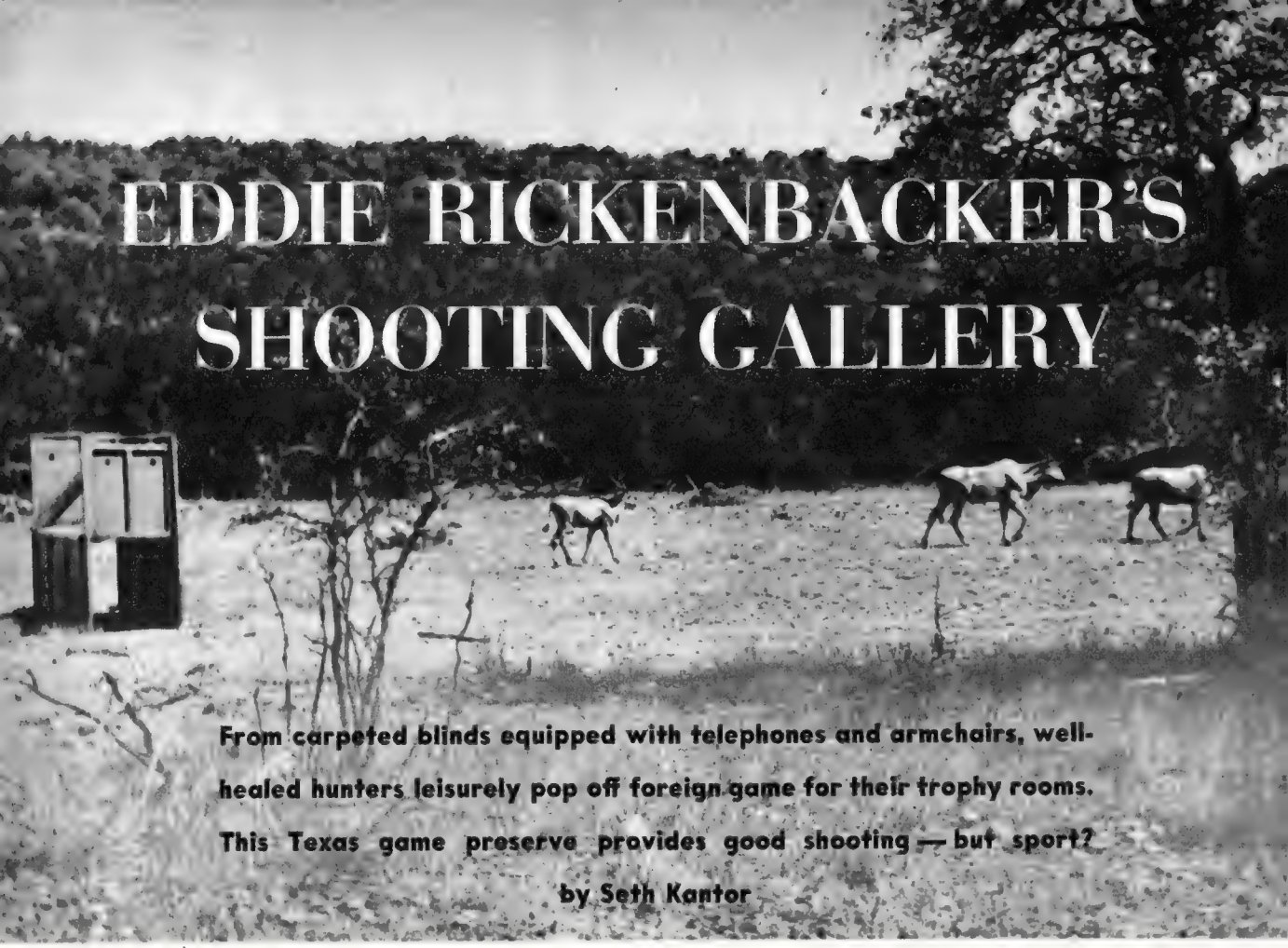
The soluble cement held and the crack was sealed. Mattar had been saved by gadgets which many had thought a complete waste of time and money.

Right now Mattar has eyes set on another endurance record. He plans to make a non-stop run from Fairbanks, Alaska, to Mexico City—more than 14,000 miles—as soon as he works out a way to change a tire without stopping.

Tires have been Mattar's biggest worry and he realizes that in a trip of more than 14,000 miles, most of it over rough roads, it is quite probable that a tire can become completely worn out. The plan he is working on calls for installing 10-ton capacity, hydraulic jacks for each tire. The jacks will be constructed on small wheels of solid rubber, built into the frame of the car, and each will be calibrated to turn with an individual wheel. It will thus be possible to change a tire without stopping. Mattar estimates the cost will run somewhere around $10,000. •


MOTOR OIL LEVEL
RADIATOR WATER LEVEL
HYDRAMATIC TEMPERATURE
REAR END LUBRICANT
REAR END TEMPERATURE
AUTOMATIC OIL CHANGE
TRAILER GAS PUMP
GAS GAUGE FOR TRAILER
EXTRA CONDENSER
EXTRA COIL
MOTOR BEARINGS TEMPERATURE
HYDRAMATIC FLUID
HOOKAH (WATER PIPE)
HYDRAMATIC
DIFFERENTIAL
MOTOR OIL COOLING
RADIATOR REFILL
EXTRA FUEL PUMP
TAPE RECORDER
BAR
GENERATOR BOOSTER
SWITCH FOR CATWALK
PANEL LIGHTS
AMMETER FOR AUTOMATIC PANELS

EDDIE RICKENBACKER'S SHOOTING GALLERY



From carpeted blinds equipped with telephones and armchairs, well-healed hunters leisurely pop off foreign game for their trophy rooms. This Texas game preserve provides good shooting — but sport?

by Seth Kantor

These African Eland antelope, the largest in the world, are temporarily off the ranch's hunting list because of low stock. Game box (left) is used to trap animals for shipment to zoos which buy them from the Rickenbackers.

The way he kept fumbling with his rifle you could tell the man wasn't much of a hunter, and it looked like his hunting clothes had never been out of the closet. If he had been wearing a tuxedo and holding a club, he would have been dressed better for the "hunt."

He was in a little shooting blind, perched 21 feet off the ground. There was a carpet on the floor, a telephone in one corner and a privy pot in another. He was leaning back comfortably in one of the two soft swivel chairs.

His guide was standing, looking through an open slit by one of the green-stained windows running around the front and sides of the tower blind. The guide whispered, "Black Buck."

Below, several Black Buck antelope from India were moving in a loose pack to the feeding area near the blind. They weren't over 50 yards from the hunter who'd gotten a side window open just enough to take aim, while he stood straddling the privy pot.

Squinting his eyes and jerking the trigger, he fired. The frightened animals leaped, twisted and scattered back to the cover of chaparral and leafy brush. One was down and wounded. Not the one aimed at by the hunter though. The guide climbed down the tower ladder and finished off the Black Buck with a clean shot.

The hunter had his trophy.

At the ranch house they asked him how he made his kill. "From the bathroom window," he said.

Such are the hunting anecdotes revealing how a "sportsman" spends his time at the Rickenbacker Ranch, nestled in the Texas hill country, two hours from San Antonio, in Kerr County. It's a place for would-be hunters who want a foreign deer or an antelope to hang over their fireplaces.

Captain Eddie Rickenbacker, flying ace of World War I, is the keeper of this fabulous shooting preserve stocked with Japanese Sika, African Eland, English Fallow, Indian Axis, Sambur, Baresingah and Black Buck.

It's the only place in America where—if you're taken by this pastime—you can shoot imported game all year long. If you don't bag just what you're after, there's no charge for trying. Except, the Rickenbackers make it easy enough for a cross-eyed Civil War veteran with a broken water pistol to come away with a kill.

The foreign game roam about in 800 of the ranch's rugged 2,700 acres while seven shooting towers are conveniently distributed throughout the preserve for the brave hunters. These "sportsmen," outfitted with guide and comfort, take to the towers and wait for the animals to approach the blinds for the slaughter.

Why do the animals come to the blind? For food, of course. It's an ingenious idea, you must admit.

One day's bag: three Black Buck antelope (India), foreground and far right; three spotted Axis deer (India); two White Tail (Texas), center; four native turkeys. The hunters paid a combined total of $1,625 to kill the animals.

Throughout the year, even when few hunters are around, a ranch hand drives a pickup truck to regular feeding areas at regular periods. He dumps out 10 bales of alfalfa and 50 shovels full of corn ears every week. Before he leaves the feeding area he blows the horn and drives off. The animals, no matter how deeply hidden in the brush, hear the horn and know it means a free handout, so they come running, then slow down to a careful pace as they near the feed zone.

By odd coincidence, the alfalfa and corn are dumped some 75 to 100 yards from each of the shooting towers which are located in nice big clearings. Buck and doe have been taught to trust the noise of the horn.

If the hunter gets bored waiting for a prize specimen to wander within close range, he can go to sleep in one of the pillowed swivel chairs. His guide will watch for and pick out the handsomest buck. The guide will even shoot the animal for the hunter. No broken antlers. No imperfections. Rickenbacker prefers that his guides do the picking. Too many overanxious gunmen have started to shoot a doe or a poaching jackass by mistake.

Firing is nearly point-blank—from 50 to 100 yards usually, so it's pretty tough to miss. The animals scatter fast with the gun noise and if the wind is right, they'll sometimes

Hunters hide themselves in blinds like this one, then wait for the unsuspecting animals to wander by. When they do, a window slides open, and bang! Another trophy.



scatter even before a shot can be fired. Their keen senses pick up cigarette smoke or a whispered word.

Trophies come high at the sophisticated shooting gallery: Black Buck antelope—$175, Axis deer—$200, Sika deer—$200, White Fallow deer—$250, Sambur deer—$300, Baresingah deer—$300.

African Elands, heftiest antelopes in the world, and English Black Fallow deer are off the shooting list right now while the ranch is being replenished with them.

Texas White Tail, a domestic deer, can be shot only in season and at $100 a head. Turkey cost $25 a kill.

The lowest prices concerning a hunt a la Rickenbacker are room and board. You get both for $8 a day at the River Bend Lodge, three miles away. Since the rooms aren't rustic enough to allow guests the luxury of having game marched in for a bedside kill, the hunters have to turn out by 5:30 and have breakfast by 6:00 so they can be picked up for the hunt by 6:30. They camp in the blinds until 11:00, then take four hours for lunch and rest and return to the towers at three in the afternoon. They knock off at dusk.

I talked to a number of men who'd spent anywhere from $400 to $800 for a weekend of shooting at Rickenbacker's. That's discounting costs for transportation, lodging and having their catches mounted. No one beefed about the money and most were excited over their foreign game.

On the other hand, not one would admit that the place is anything more than a luxury for lazy hunters, a feeble image of sportsmanship. They just wanted trophies.

I asked David Rickenbacker how he felt about the "sportsmanship" of the business. He's 28 and in full-time command of his father's ranch.

"Indians were smart hunters," he said. "They didn't go tracking deer and antelope for miles to get a shot. We use their strategy."

"What kind of strategy was that?" I asked.

"Ambush. They camped by water holes, in bushes or under a buffalo hide and waited for game to come to them."

"But didn't Indians *need* the food and skins?" I asked. "Men hunt primarily for the sport of it now."

"Our business has been booming," he said.

You can't argue with booming business, I guess. I asked about the stiff prices.

"Hunting is big business in these hills. Our rates are low compared to some of the rackets they run around here. Some lodges charge $100 or $150 a man . . . yet they haven't seen a deer in years. Others have scraggly specimens."

"And the benefits at Rickenbacker Ranch?" I asked.

"We save a man thousands of miles and dollars by bringing foreign game to Texas. Hunters go into high blinds where they can't shoot each other. They're looking for good, handsome trophies. We make sure they get them. Our stock is shootable 12 months a year. No season. No charge for missing.

"We raise deer like other Texans raise white-faced Herefords. We trap them for zoos and other preserves. But they reproduce and gobble food so fast, we'd have to kill off the crop now and then at a loss unless we let the hunters come in. They get the kill, we get the money."

David Rickenbacker illustrated his point by taking me over his knotted land of prickly pear and brambles.

Mountain lion, wildcat and poisonous snakes abound in the area. We bounced over dusty roads, down almost to the main gate where Bear Creek wanders an off-shot course from the Guadeloupe River bed, over to where the Longhorn cattle, largest remaining herd of the *vanishing breed*, roam and pose moodily in shallow water.

Finally we reached the 800 acre preserve. We drove from one tower blind to the next and watched a while from the small, stilted sheds.

You can watch the Black Buck antelope sure-foot his way to a feed zone in front of your tower. The top of his body is black, except for white ears and white patches surrounding his eyes.

Roughly 300 of them move in waves over the ranch. Wiry, fast prancers, they weigh 65 pounds at the most. Their screw-twisted horns point like a V, and their coloring makes them one of the handsomest prizes in the lot.

Then you see the Axis, numbering about 150. Ranging up to 180 pounds, they move with their heads back to protect their strange looking antlers that stretch out two-and-a-half feet. Axis horns mature at six points, rarely having seven. Their tan coats are broken by nickel-sized white spots.

From a distance, it's hard to pick out the Sika as he moves along the hills, blending easily with the terrain. Fifty of them, kin to the Korean hog deer, are in the preserve. As they grow, their skin changes from black to brown and they shed their horns twice. Their first set is four-pointed and short-spiked. The second has six points and stretch out to 33 inches.

You can see the fleshy, striped Eland antelope. Both sexes are horned. And the Baresingah, a 500-pounder. And the Sambur, almost as big, shaggy and black. The White Fallow with the palmate horns of a moose is light-coated and sticks to the draw bottoms because of summer flies.

Texas White Tails erupt with low whistles. Axis and Sika leap up with high, piercing whistles that screech through the air. Baresingah moan and Sambur bay like husky-throated coyote dogs.

David Rickenbacker has been studying the habits of the imported game and running his father's lavish shooting gallery for nearly three years. Eddie Rickenbacker bought the 2,700 acres complete, in April, 1951, from a food-freezer manufacturer who began collecting the foreign game in 1937. He used the preserve as a private shooting area for friends and business clients. He didn't pay too much attention to breeding so some of his stock was in a bad state when he sold the grounds.

Since Rickenbacker, who heads Eastern Air Lines, can't get away from his New York office with any regularity, he put David in charge. The idea hadn't been tried before, but the Rickenbackers decided to open their ranch to the public, offer easy shooting, breath-taking game and charge only for kills. Although sportsmen generally criticized the plan severely, business got off to a good start.

Eighty-five per cent of the guests sign in during the fall months, for some reason hanging onto traditional deer-hunt season dates. From four to seven hunters are booked in at a time so the shooting can be controlled.

Since Rickenbacker hasn't launched much of an advertising campaign yet—he probably doesn't want the publicity—most hunters have come from the southwest, south and midwest. But letters have come in from all over the world.

A prince in India wrote that he wanted to be the first of his land to shoot an Indian stag in Texas. One hunter, Enrique Tintore, traveled from Barcelona with his own photographer to get a kill.

Another, a Texas hotel magnate, told me he'd spent over $600 in three days, just shooting deer and antelope. He plans to go back for another hunt.

The feeling many hunters have about the Rickenbacker ranch was summed up by an outdoor editor of a southwest newspaper.

The Boone and Crockett Club of New York, he related, has a method of scoring the greatest deer ever shot in America. I asked him if he thought the Club would recognize any record buck bagged on the Rickenbacker Ranch.

He laughed. "They might enter it in their books, but they'll hold their noses.

"Once in a while you'll run across a record in the book which parenthetically reads 'Picked up by Indian.' This means the hunter came by his kill in an unsportsman-like way.

"I suppose a record kill on the Rickenbacker property would probably read 'Picked up by man in Cadillac convertible.'" •



MG-TF

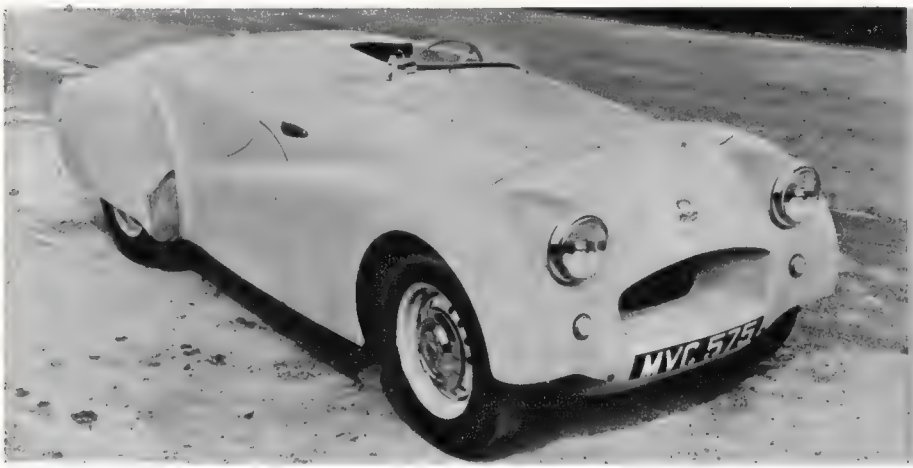
ENGINE: Cylinders, 4. Overhead valves operated by pushrods. 66.5 x 90 mm. 1.250 cc. Compression ratio, 8.1 to 1. Max power, 57.5 bhp at 5,500 rpm. Two SU carburetors.

TRANSMISSION: Single-plate dry clutch. Four-speed synchromesh gearbox with central lever control.

CHASSIS: Coil spring and wishbone front suspension. Half-elliptic springs at rear. Hydraulic brakes with 2 leading shoes at front. Fly-off racing type hand brake. Bolt-on steel disc wheels. Center lock wire wheels optional. Wheel base, 7 ft. 10 in. Tread, 47⅜ in. (front). 50 in. (rear). Overall length, 12 ft. 3 in. Width, 4 ft. 10⅜ in. Height, 4 ft. 4½ in. Kerb weight, 1,932 lbs.

PRICE: About $2,000.

NEW SPORTS CARS



TRIUMPH

ENGINE: Cylinders, 4. Overhead valves operated by pushrods. Bore, 83 mm. Stroke, 92 mm. Cubic capacity, 1.991 cc. Ratio, 8.5 to 1.

TRANSMISSION: Clutch, 9 in. Borg and Beck. Gear ratios: top, 3.7 (overdrive 3.034); third, 4.9; second, 7.4; first, 12.5; rev., 15.8; propeller shaft, Hardy Spicer; final drive, hypoid bevel.

CHASSIS: Independent front suspension by coil springs. Half-elliptic rear springs. Lockheed brakes. Wheel base, 7 ft. 4 in. Track, 3 ft. 9 in. (9½ rear). Length, 12 ft. 4 in. Width, 4 ft. 7½ in. Height, 4 ft. 2 in.

PRICE: Overdrive, heater, $2,431.

AUSTIN-HEALEY

ENGINE: Cylinders, 4. Overhead valves operated by pushrods. Bore and stroke, 3.43 x 4.37 in., 162.32 cu. in. Compression ratio, 7.5 to 1.

TRANSMISSION: Single plate dry clutch. Four speed gearbox. Electric overdrive. Spiral bevel rear axle.

CHASSIS: Coil springs, wishbones, front. Half-elliptic rear springs. Girling brakes. Wheel base, 7 ft. 6 in. Track, 4 ft. 1½ in. Length, 12 ft. 2 in. Width, 5 ft. Height, 4 ft. 1 in.

PRICE: With overdrive, wire wheels and heater, $2,985.



Canada's Flying Saucer



On the basis of information given out by the RCAF and other officials, this is what Canada's flying saucer will look like when it's completed.

by James Hornick
Aviation Editor
The Toronto Globe and Mail

Canadian scientists, after working for years under the most stringent military security, have designed a flying saucer—one which they say will leave the earth vertically and fly horizontally at speeds in the region of 1,500 miles an hour.

The goal of their research is to provide the Royal Canadian Air Force with a long-range, high-altitude, heavily-armed, supersonic fighter able to operate without the benefit of conventional airfields in the vast and vulnerable reaches of Canada's northland.

So far, the flying saucer has been proved only in the laboratory. But the research behind the blueprints has been so painstakingly thorough, according to one high government source, that no doubt remains that an aircraft of this radical concept is rapidly approaching reality.

The project has, in fact, reached the point where a full-scale wooden mockup is being built in a heavily-guarded section of the nation's largest aircraft plant. Smaller models have enabled engineers to conduct exhaustive wind tunnel tests, the results of which have never been disclosed.

The Canadian scientists have designed an almost-circular aircraft 40 feet in diameter in which the pilot is seated inside a plastic bubble. Around him, several hundred times a minute, revolves a powerful gas turbine of unconventional design.

The saucer's rim remains stationary. Air is sucked through inlets on the rim's forward surfaces and blasts of hot air are ejected through combustion chambers along the remaining perimeter and out the "tail"—a flat surface to the rear which is the craft's only control.

The swiftly revolving engine produces a gyroscopic effect so great, according to the designers' mathematical calculations, that it took several months to devise an efficient control system. Their success with this problem is attested by the claim that the saucer, as presently envisaged, can perform 180-degree turns without changing altitude.

For take offs the saucer utilizes a simple tripod undercarriage which is left behind on the ground. Like a sky-

At last—a *real* flying saucer, nobody's dream or hallucination.

Developed by the Canadian Air Force, it will revolutionize flying

rocket it soars into the air with sheer brute force, except that in this case the force is generated not by rocket propulsion but by a gyroscopic form of lift. Landings are made on a tough underbelly.

In Ottawa, Canada's capital, an official of the Canadian Defense Department had this to say about the saucer:

"The Royal Air Force is very keen on the project and suggested Canada should see it through to final development. It contains so many revolutionary features that the cost may be very high, but it would clinch Canadian prestige in the scientific world."

A spokesman for the British Air Ministry, which had studied the Canadian plans, told newsmen:

"This craft is so revolutionary that if it flies, anything now in the air becomes obsolete."

A colleague described the project as "coming closest to what everyone is looking for—a war plane independent of runways or carriers because it takes off vertically and is still able to fly at terrific speed.

In a statement to employees carried in the Avro Canada Ltd. plant newspaper, President Crawford Gordon, Jr., announced:

"For obvious reasons, neither the employees of Avro Canada nor the general public can, nor do I think they expect to be kept informed of what this or any other [aircraft] company is doing in the way of advanced design and development affecting national defense.

"All Avro has to say is this: like all aircraft companies that want to stay in business, we are directing a substantial part of our efforts toward new ideas and advanced designs. Like other firms we have a number of such projects under way. One of our projects could be said to be quite revolutionary in concept and appearance.

"That is all Avro Canada is going to say about this project now or in the future whether it proves to be practicable or whether it does not. Whatever the outcome, it must remain a secret."

The basic principle of operation of the saucer on which the Canadians are working was described by a Toronto consulting engineer.

"In the turbo-jet," he said, "compressed air passes from the front of the engine to the fuel and emerges as gas at the rear. In a flying saucer the compressed air comes from the center and passes through vanes to a fuel chamber encircling the rim like a doughnut.

"Exhausts on either side of the saucer eject the gases, giving the craft great push. By varying the direction in which the exhausts are pointed the craft can be made to go up and down.

"Mind you," he cautioned, "I said the principle is simple. Actually, the detailed engineering problems are definitely complicated. It will be years before a flying saucer can pass from the theoretical stage into actual flight."

Major General Roger Ramey, USAF operations chief in Washington, said:

"The Canadian project apparently has 'mass'; in other words it has substance. And our investigations so far show that whatever caused saucer reports was insubstantial—like electronic phenomena."

This, in the view of Ottawa officials, is the question to be decided: whether a country with the limited financial resources of Canada (population of 15,000,000) should proceed single-handedly with an engineering job which, by all reports, has not been attempted by any of her wealthier, more populous allies.

In its present state, according to the experts, the Canadian saucer could be ready to take to the air in two to 10 years—depending on the amount of money and the number of high-ranking engineers assigned to the task.

The need for such an unusual aircraft is evident with one cursory glance at a map of the Canadian Arctic. Airfields along the tundra belt are almost non-existent. Those in use by the Royal Canadian Air Force and commercial airlines are predominantly of the short-runway type, inaccessible to present-day jet fighters which require longer distances for takeoff and landing. A straight-up, straight-down saucer could operate in any area dictated by tactical necessity.

The main research is being directed by specially selected teams from Canada's National Aeronautical Establishment, the Canadian Defense Research Board, Air Force Headquarters at Ottawa and Avro Canada Ltd., a private company with substantial facilities for aircraft and gas turbine production at Malton, a suburb of Toronto.

Behind this program is a theory recently explained by Dr. Omond M. Solandt, wartime member of Britain's Army Operational Research Group and now chairman of the highly secret Canadian Defense Research Board.

"Military research in Canada," Dr. Solandt said, "must be limited to a relatively small number of projects. In selecting fields for research the Board attempts to choose ones of particular importance to the Canadian services and in which the work can be more effectively done in Canada than elsewhere.

"The Board has always regarded a new idea as a unique resource and consequently has backed important new ideas arising in Canada. It is a natural corollary . . . that we should try to concentrate our effort on the more speculative research and development that is likely to produce major improvements."

Avro Canada Ltd., to which Dr. Solandt has entrusted several phases of the saucer project, is one of the main segments of Canadian defense production.

It is at the Avro plant that the wooden mockup of the saucer is being constructed. Experts in the fields of electronics and armament are anxiously awaiting its completion. For, once they have something more tangible than blueprints to work with, they can advise the government as to the variety, weight and probable effectiveness of fire power that can be installed.

Only in the past few months has Avro even conceded the existence of a saucer project; previous enquiries were always answered with blanket denials.

Little detailed information, therefore, has emerged about Canada's venture into the aeronautical future. But if what information we have is reliable—and I'm satisfied that it is—Canada is on its way to making the most revolutionary advancement in aviation history. •



I Got the Job Nobody Wants

You're the bait—and even though you don't know the man coming into the trap, you do know he's twisted and desperate. And you're without a gun

by Joel N. Clark

In every major city in the United States there is a police detail that is looked upon with scorn by all police officers. It is a very necessary function of any metropolitan department—its purpose is to protect the citizens from being molested by sexual deviates. It is commonly known as the Vice Squad. The particular detail to which I am referring goes by a variety of other names, mostly uncomplimentary.

For three years I worked as a vice officer for the Los Angeles Police Department. During that period I "operated" and arrested more than a hundred homosexuals. I have been wooed by movie stars, bank presidents, city officials and prize fighters. I have ducked like a coy schoolgirl to keep from being kissed by a weight lifter. It's a rotten, dirty, thankless job. It's a job that has to be done.

Greater Los Angeles has probably the largest homosexual population of any city in the country, despite the protestations of the Chamber of Commerce. The Police Department recognizes this and takes stringent measures to control the homosexuals' activities and to prevent citizens from being bothered by them. Lack of cooperation from the local courts and poor psychiatric facilities, however, combine to make perverts still a major police problem.

What makes Southern California so attractive to these misguided people? Probably the same climatic and economical factors that appeal to our more heterosexual citizens also attract them. This, and the fact that Los Angeles is known as a "gay" city, combine to draw homosexuals in the same manner that a known "gay" cafe will soon be patronized exclusively by the third sex. Whatever the reason for the abundance, it is the duty of the Vice Squad to investigate violations and to make arrests when necessary.

After several months as a uniformed officer working radio cars and walking beats in Central Division, I was notified that I had been transferred to Central Vice Detail. To the average rookie "harness" cop, a transfer to any plainclothes detail is like telling an Army private that he can stand retreat in his swimming trunks. It means no more badge-shining, no more leather-polishing, knife-edge trousers, cap-square-on-the-head-at-all-times and, praise Allah, no more going eight hours without a cigarette.

The night I reported for vice duty I probably looked like a B movie's idea of the working detective. Resplendent in my gray gabardine suit, hand-painted tie and with my

service revolver bulging importantly in a new shoulder holster, I sauntered nonchalantly into the Vice office 30 minutes before roll call. A short time later I was glad I had come in early.

"Look, Sam Spade," the sergeant growled after one glance. "We are not going to the Mayor's birthday party tonight. We intend to do a little work. Now breeze right home and get into an old pair of slacks and a sport shirt. Leave that damn cannon at home. And don't be late for roll call."

An hour or so later, appropriately clad, weaponless and subdued, I stood on a downtown street corner with my new partner. Diagonally across the street was a neon-lighted, middle-class cocktail lounge. "We got two beefs on this place," Bill informed me, "one of them from the owner. Some guys have been pestering his customers. Now go in and have a toddy like any other law-abiding citizen and see if you're bothered by anyone. I'll be staked out across the street. If you leave with a 'live' one, I'll tail you."

I took a seat at the bar and ordered a drink, feeling like a first year drama student on opening night. The bar was about half-full and fairly noisy, but it seemed to me that every patron in the place was staring straight at me. Twice I looked down to make sure I hadn't pinned my badge on my shirt by mistake. (Later I discovered that this is a commonplace feeling among rookie Vice men.)

I was on my third beer when I was accosted. A voice on my left purred, "Hello darling, what are you drinking?" Shocking? Not at first, for I turned half expecting to see a sultry-eyed B-girl in a low cut gown. Instead, my husky voiced inquisitor was six feet tall and wore a small black mustache. George, as I shall call him, insisted on buying me a drink, and after a few minutes started bending my ear about the trials and tribulations of a hard working interior decorator. Around closing time George suggested that we go to his apartment and listen to some new records he'd bought. Not sure what to do in this situation, I reluctantly agreed. Once outside the bar, I could see no sign of my partner.

We drove to a swank apartment house just off Hollywood Boulevard in George's new convertible. Once, when I dared to look over my shoulder for Bill, I could see a faint glimmer of headlights many blocks behind.

As George unlocked the door to his apartment he paused, as if remembering something. "You're not a policeman, are you?" he asked. Then, before I could answer, he replied for me, much to my relief. "No, I know you're not, I can tell one a mile away." How many times since have I heard those same words, just prior to making an arrest.

Once inside, George was the perfect host. Seating me comfortably on an oversize divan and bringing me a Scotch and soda, he placed a few new records on his phonograph and returned to the bedroom. A few minutes later he appeared wearing a purple silk bathrobe. After turning off a few lights, he sat down beside me and made what the newspapers discreetly refer to as "improper advances."

Now, all Vice officers are well instructed in just what constitutes an overt act, whether it be a verbal suggestion or a physical move on the part of the suspect. Confident that I had enough evidence for a Lewd Vagrancy conviction, I pulled my badge from my pocket and showed it to George, at the same time informing him that he was under

The author, Vice Squad Officer J. N. Clark, nails a pervert. In Los Angeles convicted offenders are required to carry cards.



arrest. For one stunned moment he stared at my buzzer in disbelief. Then I caught a glimpse of his right fist coming from nowhere just before it hit me on the chin.

I came to shortly afterward with my partner gleefully dripping my unfinished Scotch and soda in my face. George was slumped in a nearby chair, sobbing, with blood coming from his nose. "He ran into me coming out the door," Bill related. "Seemed to be in a heluva hurry. We wrestled a little before I could get him back in."

While George dressed for the trip to Lincoln Heights Jail, Bill scorched me for my carelessness. "Never try to make an arrest while you're sitting down, whether it's for a felony or a misdemeanor. Remember that a morals charge is more serious to most men than a pinch for burglary or robbery. Always get on your feet before buzzing a suspect, tell him you have a partner nearby and watch him closely until your partner arrives."

To my immense relief, Bill never related my failure to the rest of the squad.

That night I didn't sleep so well and it wasn't only because of an aching jaw. When I swore to protect the citizens of our fair city, I hadn't realized that I would have to go to such extreme lengths. Of course, I could have asked for a transfer to another detail but I didn't like the idea of quitting before I gave the job a fair trial. Maybe I'll get used to it, I thought. I never did.

In time I became a squad leader and applied all the valuable lessons that Bill had taught me. I learned the hangouts of sex offenders, their jargon and modus operandi (method of operation). Public rest rooms, city parks, steam baths, libraries and all night movies seem to attract homosexuals. When a deviate is "cruising," or looking for a partner in sin, it is a simple thing for the experienced Vice officer to spot him. Furtive glances, loitering about public places, these and other peculiarities serve to identify the pervert to an expert. Sometimes, however, it is difficult to recognize the bi-sexual, or borderline, aberrates. Contrary to common belief, about 80 per cent of all persons arrested on morals charges are married. Many have children, grandchildren, and in one extreme case that I recall, great-grandchildren.



A Vice Squad officer looks through a peephole in the wall of a public toilet. Most of L. A.'s public men's rooms have these spots so that suspects may be watched.

Homosexuality is no respecter of profession or position. In the past several years I can recall at least four policemen and one FBI agent who were "operated" by the squad. Needless to say, these people are now employed elsewhere.

According to California law there are only two sections in the penal code under which homosexuals can be prosecuted. Section 288-A, a felony, applies to persons who are actually caught engaged in a perverted act. This section carries a maximum sentence of 15 years imprisonment. Section 647.5, a misdemeanor, is punishable by a fine of not more than $500 or six months in jail. The latter section states that, "any lewd or dissolute person is a vagrant." Ambiguous? Slightly. Proving this section in court is often difficult and always embarrassing—at least to the testifying officer. There is also a municipal ordinance, the most intelligent of the three, which requires all convicted sex offenders in the city to register with the police department and carry their registration card at all times.

Nobody loves a Vice cop, not even other policemen, but this is especially true of officers who work homosexuals. After a while, you get used to the lisping wisecracks at roll call, but when someone at a social gathering asks you what kind of work you do on the department, there is usually an embarrassing silence. Once, when in my cups, I was asked by a portly matron of short acquaintance to relate some exciting experience as a "detective." Whereupon, I proceeded to tell what I thought was a screamingly funny story of a stevedore chasing me around a motel room with lust in his eye, before I could identify myself as a policeman. She hasn't spoken to me since.

Most people think of Vice men as keyhole-peeping, transom-snooping killjoys. If a policeman arrests a holdup man or a purse-snatcher, he's a hero. Let the same officer pinch a bookmaker, prostitute or degenerate and he's wasting the taxpayer's money. I often think of something a retired Fire Department captain told me when I was first thinking of trying for the Police Department. He said, "Son, get on the fire department if you can. The pay is the same, and nobody ever gets mad at you for pouring water on a fire."

Why would any officer want to work Vice? Well, Vice is known as "the poor man's detective bureau." Working the squad you get plainclothes investigative experience that a uniformed policeman never gets. You make invaluable contacts with bar owners, cab drivers, prostitutes, hop heads, informers and all the thousand and one members of the semi-underworld that are so necessary to the successful detective. Working undercover you hear many things that a known policeman would never here. A few years of vice experience may qualify you for a job in one of the detective bureaus, which is, by and large, the goal of every officer on the force. Then, too, Vice men have a great deal more freedom and less supervision than the average uniform officer. On the other hand, dressing casually while working usually precludes carrying either weapon or handcuffs.

Sometimes while working on a homosexual complaint, officers will stumble onto something much more serious. This happened to my partner and me on one occasion when we saw a suspected pervert transfer a pistol from one pocket to another while in a public restroom. Since neither of us was armed, we had to plan a quick tackle of the suspect as he left the place. He later confessed to three armed robberies.

Testifying in court on morals cases can be embarrassing and sometimes humorous. Defense attorneys usually try to prove entrapment or, failing that, attempt to put the arresting officer on trial. Lawyers who specialize in defending homosexuals are among the most able trial attorneys in the profession, and certainly the most prosperous.

I recall one jury trial in superior court in which two men were charged with a felony count of sex perversion. The rookie officer who made the arrest had testified that he observed the activities of the defendants through a bedroom window for a period of 15 minutes. On cross examination, the defense attorney, a well known woman lawyer, was trying to impeach this particular part of the witness's testimony.

"Officer Blank," she insisted, "you have stated that you stood at that window for a period of fifteen minutes before you finally decided to enter and make an arrest. Will you tell the jury, if you can, why you waited so long?"

In all truthfulness, the red-faced youngster answered, "I was so astounded at what was going on that I couldn't move."

The jury returned a guilty verdict in 10 minutes.

Many times a naive jury will release offenders against whom officers have prepared an air-tight case. As witness one particular trial in which a woman and three men were charged with a very uninhibited frolic in a Hollywood apartment. The evidence was overwhelming, the testimony good and all participants had admitted their actions to the arresting officers. After 10 hours the jury was stalemated 11 to 1 for conviction and the court was forced to discharge the panel. As the jury left the courtroom the prosecutor stopped a little old lady of 70 years and asked her if she would mind telling him why she could not agree on a conviction. "Well, sir," she snapped, "I just don't believe people do those awful things."

Criminal courts rarely mete out jail sentences to misdemeanor violators, even after several convictions. In the rare cases where malefactors are given stiff jail terms complaints of violations drop off to a mere trickle. While jail punishment is certainly no cure for morals offenders, it is a deterrant to those who read about it.

After an officer has worked the vice detail for a number of years he is "burned" or "made" by most of the gay crowd. In other words, his description has passed around town and he is no longer able to operate homosexuals who are "in the know." When the time comes that a policeman hears the whispered word, "Fuzz," when he walks into a bar, his usefulness as an operator has ceased. And when this time comes, most vice men are either transferred to a uniform detail or some other plainclothes work.

Sex offenders are fast becoming a major police problem in this country. Archaic laws for the control of homosexuals saddle police with a heavy enforcement burden. Homosexuals, as such, are no great threat to law and order. When these people take advantage of minor boys or molest citizens, then they must be arrested. The vice squad is charged with the responsibility of making the arrests.

The Los Angeles Police Department is short of officers. If you are between the ages of 21 and 31, of good health and with an average education, you may apply. You might get on the vice squad. It's a job nobody wants. •



Finished table looks like this. Glass and design create illusion of lightness.

YOU CAN BUILD THIS COFFEE TABLE

Here's an extremely simple, yet attractive coffee table for your living room. You'll need only four pieces of construction material to complete it: two pieces of sculptured 2-inch oak, a 3-foot in diameter circle of plate glass, and 6½ inches of ⅜-inch steel rod which is used as a pivot for the base.

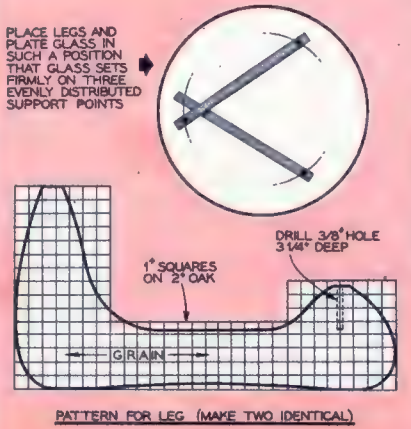
The table surface will be surprisingly large, while the shape of the base and the transparent top will create the illusion of lightness.

The first step is to make yourself a pattern for the two base pieces, then glue up the 2-inch oak pieces as shown in the photograph at lower right.

Next, rough out the shape of the base pieces with a handsaw or circular saw. Afterwards, trace the pattern onto the glued-up pieces, then hand-carve them to shape. If you have a bandsaw, the entire profile can be cut accurately. You may use a spokeshave for rounding off the edges. Since both base pieces are identical, when you finish the first follow the same procedure for the second piece.

After carving, bore a ⅜-inch hole in each leg (where the two pieces of wood come into contact). The holes house the pivot rod. Next, finish the woodwork with three coats of varnish steel-wooled between applications.

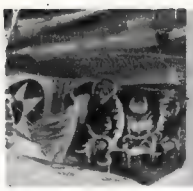
Although this table should have ¾-inch glass for the top, you may use a thinner and less expensive type glass plate. The glass top remains firmly in position by virtue of its own weight.



PATTERN FOR LEG (MAKE TWO IDENTICAL)

The two base pieces are roughly shaped by gluing sections of 2-inch oak together. Next, they are cut to shape.





DEAD MAN'S LOG

Continued from page 27

spirits were much higher today, especially after our little church service. Our only food today was one slice of pineapple and two spoonfuls of juice. Played a couple of games of hearts before going to bed to pray that the boys got through and that they will bring us food soon. If we don't live to eat all the things we talk about will have at least mentally eaten some of the best meals in the world. God grant that we get out safely.

JANUARY 11TH Our third day of perfect weather. Also the coldest day since right after we got here. Spent the day watching for the plane which didn't come. The oil gave out on this side, which brings up another problem. Our ration for the day was one-eighth can of Spam and a soda cracker each. The short rations are beginning to tell on us, but we are still in high spirits, and have plenty of hope. Had another "church" service, which did us all good. Spent a couple of hours arguing and discussing the respective merits of different candies. Rank was Hershey's Almond, Nestle's, Baby Ruth, and Heath Bar. With Milky Way and Whiz coming close.

JANUARY 12TH Today was the boys' 20th day—our 33rd—and was overcast, but calm. We got the oil almost dug out, but are all so weak that we can hardly work. The boys' spirits are still high though, and we had a couple of lively bull sessions over our one topic of conversation—food. Our ration today was a slice of pineapple.

JANUARY 13TH Another calm, overcast day. We dug up the oil, dried out the blankets, made a new bed of snow, and ate our last solid food—a slice of Spam and a soda cracker each. All we have left is a half pound of chocolates and three drink powders, but we talk like rescue was a certainty tomorrow. It cleared off late this afternoon, so maybe there is hope for tomorrow.

JANUARY 14TH Clear day but with wind. We cleared off the plane and waited, but nothing happened. Late this afternoon, we were playing cards when Shull poured the gas too fast, which caused an explosion which burned both his and my face, hair and hands. Our ration was four chocolates, but we are still working out pretty well. After a little devotional, we went to bed.

JANUARY 15TH A perfect day as to weather, but the coldest since we got here. Spent most of the day trying to keep warm, and listening for a plane. Also made big plans for a couple of days in New York when we get our furloughs. Ration was two chocolates and a bouillon powder. None are particularly hungry yet, but we are all getting weaker and colder because our bodies aren't putting out enough heat.

JANUARY 16TH Another calm, clear day, but the coldest we have had yet. The oil froze up, so we had to end up by burning nothing but gas. Ate the last thing even resembling food (two chocolates apiece) which leaves us with one bouillon powder and two sticks of gum. The strain is beginning to tell, but we still have good bull sessions about food and a furlough in New York.

JANUARY 17TH Couldn't have asked for better weather, except that it was so cold that the oil and hydraulic fluid were frozen, and wouldn't run, so our gas is going pretty fast. Had our last food—a bouillon powder, so unless a rescue comes in a few days . . . The boys have been gone 25 days, which is a long time, but they are still our only hope.

JANUARY 18TH Cold and clear. My watch stopped, so we didn't get up until noon. Must be a little warmer, because we got a little oil. Today was our first completely foodless day, but spirits are still pretty good. It's surprising the amount of punishment the body and mind can take when necessary. We are still in pretty good physical condition, though rather weak, and are still able to talk cheerfully of food and home, though there can't be too much hope left.

JANUARY 19TH Cold and clear. Let the oil run all night and got enough breakfast (hot-water-special coffee). Didn't get up until almost 1:00, so didn't have a very long day. Had another almost disastrous fire, but made out with the loss of one cushion.

JANUARY 20TH It snowed and blew pretty hard last night, but we all slept pretty well, and were much more cheerful today. We stayed up longer than we should have though, and are pretty tired.

JANUARY 21ST Six weeks today. Had a rough night with rain and snow, so everything inside was soaked when we got up. Only Shull and I got up, then only long enough to melt some snow. Things could still be worse.

JANUARY 22ND Got up around noon and were up until about 6:00. Cleared out the entrance and made the bed. The weather seems to be clearing after three days of bad weather. We could stand some good weather.

JANUARY 23RD Spent a miserable night—everybody was crowded and nobody could get comfortable. Had a good day but everybody is getting pretty discouraged although the conversation was pretty good. We haven't really felt famished, but we really are weak. It gets me to see the boys start to do something, and then stop for lack of will power to go on. Shull has developed a case of piles, which is bothering him a good bit.

JANUARY 24TH Had a miserable night, but perfectly clear day. Got up at 1:30, shot the bull, drew gas, and went back to bed at 7:30.

JANUARY 25TH Cold and clear, better night, but still pretty bad.

JANUARY 26TH Overcast but fairly calm. Each day, we don't see how we can last another day, but each time we manage to go on. We all smoked a pipe of tobacco this morning, and Leadley got really sick and I felt pretty bad, but we came out of it pretty well.

FEBRUARY 3RD Spent a solid week in bed. Today, Shull died after being mentally unbalanced for several days. We are all pretty weak, but should be able to last several more days.

This is the last entry in the diary. The men were found early in March by Eskimos from Hebron, which was only about an hour and a half away by foot. •



I AM A JET CRASH DETECTIVE

Continued from page 5

which had lost its tension. This had caused a small fuel leak to develop, spraying highly-combustible jet kerosene around the scorching-hot tailpipe.

All F-84's on the base were immediately grounded and inspected. Three more of those elfin springs were found to be weak and ready to let go.

It helps, of course, to have a live pilot to talk to after an accident. And often as not we have one, thanks to a convenient gadget called the ejection seat which pops the pilot out of the cockpit.

But even the presence of a live pilot is no guarantee that we're going to turn up any useful clues. He may not have stuck around the airplane long enough to find out what went wrong. Or it may have been a miscue of his own that caused the crash. Most are reluctant to admit it.

When I talk with these boys, I have to phrase my questions carefully. Instead of asking, "Did you apply your dive brakes when the trouble started?" I ask, "What

did you do when the trouble started?"

The point of all this is not to punish the pilot or dock his pay for the price of the airplane. Our object is to find out if there was pilot error—and what kind—so we can revise our training procedure, if necessary, to keep other pilots from making the same mistake.

After a fatal crash, we talk to everybody who is even remotely involved. The flight crew, the pilot's friends, his roommate or his wife. How did he act before it happened? Did he seem tense, jittery?

Out of this subtle information may come the answer to a crash puzzler. We had a case at Luke, for instance, of a fine young flier who cracked up on the runway. It wasn't a very serious accident, and entirely unavoidable. The pilot resumed flying. A short time afterward he made a routine dive over the gunnery range, failed to pull up and crashed.

Through an investigation we learned that the young pilot was haunted by the memory of his runway mishap. He was afraid people might think it had made him jet-shy. He was determined to prove that he was as aggressive as ever by making a good score on the gunnery range. As he peeled off he lined up the target in his sights and pressed his gun button. Then he held the target for one more second to get in another good burst. It was one second too long.

While the accident investigator is questioning a flight crew, roommate or wife, he's also on the lookout for chance witnesses of the crash. It might be a farmer in his alfalfa field, or a motorist who heard the whining roar of a jet and peered up through the window of his car.

Wherever it's feasible in the case of a fatal crack-up, we conduct an autopsy on the pilot. One autopsy gave us the cause of a whole series of crack-ups at another jet fighter base not long ago.

The crashes were all of a pattern. They occurred at night. A flight of four jets would take off. A moment or so later, without warning, the No. 4 plane would plunge into the ground.

Then it happened once more. The pilot involved was flying the tail-end-Charlie position in a flight of four F-80's on a night cross-country mission. The flight made a good take-off. But about a mile off the end of the runway, No. 4 abruptly dove to earth and was killed.

This time there was enough of the pilot left for flight surgeons to do an autopsy. They turned in an interesting report. Enough carbon monoxide was found in the pilot's bloodstream to have seriously impaired his night vision.

With this important clue they decided finally that the No. 4 man, as he taxied across the field with his canopy open, was breathing in fumes from the tailpipes of the three jets ahead of him.

Evidence was abundant that the same thing had happened in the mysterious crashes that had gone before. Thereafter jet pilots went on 100 per cent oxygen as soon as they fired up their engines.

In case of any mishap the local investigator can call in civilian experts from the outside—an Allison man or a Goodyear man.



"Poysonally I t'ink you're a chump but dis makes me look good to da crowd."

Moreover, we can—and usually do—draw upon the vast reservoir of aeronautical know-how which Uncle Sam himself maintains at Norton Air Force Base, near San Bernardino, Calif. This is the Air Force's safety headquarters.

Quite often a crash occurs at one base or another and the base investigator can't unravel it. But Norton's experts check it against similar accidents occurring in three or four other places. Then, possibly, a significant trend appears.

One Norton specialist solved the weirdest accident we ever had.

It took place at a gunnery range. An F-84 pilot was letting down from 5,000 feet for a sweep at his target. All of a sudden, at about 500 miles an hour, the ship went into a roll. It recovered, then whirled into another roll. The pilot had had enough. He bailed out.

All the pilot could tell us was that the plane had gone out of control. We examined the crash area and found what looked like a clue. One tip-tank and part of the tail section were lying along the path of impact—but *ahead* of the point of impact. They seemed to have come off before the plane crashed. We decided tentatively that the tip-tank had jerked loose in flight and struck the tail section.

But there was one flaw in our logic. The tip-tank showed no signs of having struck a metallic surface.

By this time eyewitnesses were being heard from. Another jet pilot in the vicinity said that just as the doomed plane swung into its first roll, its tail section appeared to bend.

In from Norton came a couple of skilled metallurgists. They went over the twisted tail with a magnifying glass.

The plane had been literally broken apart in flight by *harmonic vibration*. This is what causes a glass to break when a certain note is played on a violin. In the case of the F-84, air density, wind velocity, engine behavior and other factors brought on the strange vibration. All these things combined at one precise instant, at one precise point on the frame of the airplane—it was a combination of circumstances that could have occurred only one time in a trillion.

Such a crash isn't likely to happen again ever. But if it does, one of us will be called to the scene and asked only one question—how did it happen? •



THE MAN WHO STOLE THE MONA LISA

Continued from page 17

for the next day, but he had no intention of showing up. Instead, he boarded a train for southern France and never saw Lancelotti again.

Ironically enough, Picquet, the head workman, returned to the Salon Carré a few minutes after Perugia and Lancelotti left and noticed almost immediately that the Mona Lisa was missing and if he had started screaming copper, the two thieves would have been collared in the street. But because the official photographers in the Louvre were in the habit of taking shots of the Mona Lisa on Mondays, Picquet didn't give the missing masterpiece a second thought. This cost him his job and consigned him to his bedroom for the next eight months with a heart attack.

It wasn't until Tuesday morning, a full day after the robbery, that Louvre officials discovered that the most expensive painting in the world was gone.

The first announcement came from Francis Poupardin, sergeant of the guards, who saw the empty space and screamed, "She is stolen, she is stolen!"

When the news broke out, there was the kind of uproar throughout the country that you might expect in the wake of a great national disaster. An immediate investigation had bombshell repercussions. Two high officials, accused of laxity, dropped dead. Two others joined Picquet as heart attack victims. More than 20 staff members were fired, including Sauvet, the too-helpful plumber.

Almost the entire police force of Paris was assigned to hunt for the stolen Mona Lisa. As a result, crimes of violence shot up 50 percent in the next two months.

The hunt was directed by the much-publicized Alphonse Bertillon at the time heralded as the continent's No. 1 detective—all because he had developed a system for identifying criminals. After examining the abandoned shadow box, frame and glass, and recovering the missing doorknob which Perugia had tossed down a grating, Bertillon announced that the robbery had been an inside job. He found four fingerprints on the glass; three were smudged, but a left thumb print was clear.

This looked like the big break and Bertillon promptly ordered the greatest mass fingerprinting in French history. Every artist who'd ever worked in the Louvre, art teachers, picture framers, catalogue writers, new and old guards, and carload lots of everyday Joes were rounded up. None of their prints matched.

Bertillon then turned to his own file of 750,000 known criminals. Then it turned out he had been storing up only *right* thumb prints and the abuse that hit him over this fiasco practically finished the Bertillon system as well as its creator.

After a month in southern France, Perugia, lonely for Paris, returned to the Seine. He took odd jobs again to eat and while he eked out a grubby existence, his $5,000,000 prize was hidden under the linoleum of his kitchen floor. He never tried to sell it. He just spent his nights looking at it and talking to himself about Mathilde.

Probably the Mona Lisa would still be hidden under Perugia's kitchen linoleum if he hadn't broken his own case. He became more and more erratic so that by late 1913, he couldn't hold any job. He began to realize that he couldn't spend his life hiding out with the painting, but he didn't know how to tear himself away from the memory of Mathilde?

A newspaper clipping gave him the idea for what he thought would be an effective compromise. It quoted an official of the Italian government as saying that the missing Mona Lisa meant more to the Italian people—who still regarded it as rightfully theirs—than it did to the French. "Italy," he said, "would do almost anything to recover the Mona Lisa."

A few days later, an art dealer in Florence named Alfredo Geri received a letter from Paris signed by a Vincenzo Leonard. It was in answer to an ad Geri had placed in a number of European newspapers asking for pictures to sell. "The Mona Lisa is in my possession," Leonard wrote. "I took her from the Louvre for I felt sure she must return to Italy. I would not ask any price for it, but I am very poor and need something. I await your reply."

Geri showed the contents of the letter to Giovanni Poggi, curator of the famed Uffizi Gallery. They decided to ask Leonard to come to Florence.

On December 10, 1913, Vincenzo Leonard, who was of course, Vincenzo Perugia, arrived in Florence. When Geri and Poggi compared photographic enlargements with the painting the visitor brought from Paris, they called in the police. The Mona Lisa had been found.

The world believed what Perugia had written to Geri and assumed he had stolen the masterpiece because of patriotism for his native Italy. But when detective Jean Nicausse of the French police found hundreds of love letters from Mathilde in Perugia's effects, the little glazier blurted out the story of his lost love. He had decided to bring the masterpiece to Italy in the belief that the Italians would be so grateful to him that they would allow him to be the Mona Lisa's official guardian for the rest of his life.

At his formal trial in Paris, Perugia offered no defense. However, the French were so happy to have the lady with the smile back in the Louvre to be vindictive that they let Perugia off with a two-year jail term. The crooked De Valfierno, however, was even more fortunate. He spent the rest of his life in the Near East in sumptuous splendor and never pulled off another swindle. As he explained it to an old confederate in crime, "In my career, I always tried to make my next swindle more dramatic and more spectacular than the last. But after the Mona Lisa case, I knew I had reached the end. How could I possibly top that one?"

Paroled at the end of a year, Perugia was free to go anywhere, but he didn't feel like going anywhere again. He merely went back to his little Paris flat and died quietly, probably comforted by the hope of once again joining his beloved Mathilde. •



WE GOT 'EM ALL AT CANON CITY

Continued from page 13

I was standing at the head of the steps inside the main gate when they brought Schwartzmiller in. The guards were carrying him, face down, by small "dog chains" wrapped around his neck and feet.

There were about 20 or 30 of these steps—all concrete—and Schwartzmiller's head bounced off each one. He was fully conscious—but he didn't say a word.

I was in the warden's office when they got Heilman and Turley. It was right after dawn, and a posse had just sent an urgent radio request for a riot gun. The cons were in a small trailer cabin not far from Canon.

We took a guard with a riot gun on a wild, 70-mile-an-hour drive over snow-packed dirt roads. When we got there, Turley was dead, and Heilman had been wounded and in due course captured.

The warden was feeling better. With Heilman in, eight of the escapees had been accounted for within 15 hours after the break. There were only four to go.

I was out with several posses during the morning and early afternoon to check out the tips that were coming in. Suddenly we got a hurry-up radio call to return to the pen.

A group of weary guards were taking a breather. They had been plodding up a mountainside when they spotted three escapees huddled together in a lean-to made of blankets, canvas and rock. There was a small hole near the ground where the rocks came together. One of the guards drew a bead on the hole and pumped a rifle slug through it.

"One of the boys let out a hell of a yell," the guard said, and the other two came running out with their hands up. The fight was all out of 'em.

The third con, the wounded one, would have come out, too, but he couldn't walk. The slug, the guards said, had bored through his testicles.

The officers had brought the two unhurt cons back to the prison with them. They were Ernest (Cockeye) LaVergne, a veteran gunman once known as Denver's Public Enemy No. 1, and Harold Hathaway. The wounded man was John Smalley, a tough habitual criminal.

The break was now less than 24 hours old, but only one convict was still on the loose—Sherbondy, a killer who boasted that he was "too tough" for any jail.

Once more the weary prison guards started combing the area around the penitentiary. And then, as the manhunt entered its third day, on the morning of January 2, a rancher placed a hurried call to Roy Best.

"Get out to my place right away," he blurted. "Sherbondy's out here."

After the break, Sherbondy had slogged through the snow to the ranch of George Smith and hidden in a hay barn. He stayed there without food, water or heat, until about six o'clock on the evening of January 1. Then, cold and hungry, he staggered to the back door of the modest home of Mr. and Mrs. George Bauer, whose small ranch adjoined the Smiths'.

Mrs. Bauer saw him coming and yelled for her husband. Sherbondy broke down the bolted door and threatened them with one of the homemade shotguns.

Sherbondy immediately ordered the terrified Mrs. Bauer to fix him a big meal. In the house with the Bauers was their son, Jerry, seven, and a 10-year-old daughter. Shortly after the convict broke into the house, Jerry started crying and complaining of a pain in his side. The pains got worse and it was impossible to keep him quiet.

Mrs. Bauer, convinced that her son had appendicitis, pleaded with Sherbondy to let her take Jerry to the hospital. But the convict refused to let them leave.

"Finally," Bauer said, "about four o'clock in the morning, we talked him into it. He let my wife take Jerry out, but he told her she'd better not talk or something would happen to us."

When Mrs. Bauer couldn't start the car, she went to Smith's home and woke the rancher. He drove the silent woman and her sobbing son to the hospital, and then returned to help Bauer get his car started. Sherbondy, apparently losing his spirit, let Bauer go out to the car.

Outside, Bauer got an idea. He went back inside the house and told Sherbondy that his wife wanted to talk to his daughter on the phone. They would have to go to another ranch.

The convict gave up. He told Bauer to take his daughter and leave. Bauer did and raced for the nearest phone. Sherbondy was just leaving when the guards pulled into the yard. His legs were badly frostbitten; he gave up without a fight. The break was over. •



THE RHUBARB THEY'LL NEVER FORGET

Oklahoma U. and Oklahoma A. & M. have had some thrilling battles but the prize of the series was the 1904 clash. Oklahoma, then known as Indian Territory, was a brawling land of hardy frontiersmen who demanded their football rough and bloody . . . and often settled rhubarbs with blazing six-guns.

On November 5th the Sooners were scheduled to meet A. & M., but neither team had the funds or the endurance to make the 100-mile trip to the rival campus. They settled the problem by agreeing to meet half-way at Guthrie, the Territorial capital.

The game was to be played at Island Park, a combination picnic ground and terrapin racing arena converted into a football field for the occasion. Cottonwood Creek, which split in a "Y" and surrounded the island playing field, was roaring from recent rains. A northwest wind blew in a freezing gale.

Dressed in their quilted jerseys and moleskin pants, the two teams lined up, eyeing each other menacingly, ready for the mayhem they expected.

Oklahoma kicked off to A. & M. The ball soared deep into the end zone. Instead of touching the ball down behind the goal and getting 20 yards of free ground, the Aggies chose to run it out. They were smeared on their own 10 yard line.

On the next two plays the Aggies lost eight of those 10 yards.

With the ball resting on their own two, the Aggies lined up in punt formation. Fullback B. O. Callahan went back to kick and started the queerest play known to football. There was a big Owl Cigar sign in the outer end zone stripe and because of this, Callahan had to line up short, kick fast, and incline the ball sharply to clear his own linemen.

But he inclined the ball too much and it went straight up. The strong wind caught the ball and carried it behind the goal. An excited yell burst from the grandstand. Free ball!

The ball floated toward Cottonwood Creek and splashed into the choppy water. Both teams raced after it, followed by the fans.

Bob Baird, an Aggie guard, reached the creek first. Not wanting to brave the icy waters, he tried to fish the ball out with a stick. Becker Matthews, OU left tackle, threw a flying block at Baird and sent him sprawling into the water—nearer the ball. Realizing his mistake, Matthews dived head-first into the creek.

Both men waded furiously after the ball. Each man had it on several occasions, but the slick ball kept squirting from their hands. Matthews finally thwarted Baird by dunking him in neck-deep water. Baird, who couldn't swim, decided drowning was too high a price to pay for becoming the hero of a football game, and staggered ashore, water-logged, but alive.

Three Aggies jumped into the freezing water to replace Baird, followed by four Sooners. The boys began to mix it up in earnest. Flurries of fists and feet churned the water. Not wanting to miss the fun, the remainder of the players hopped in too. Some of them later claimed they were pushed in by over-eager fans.

Matthews fumbled the slippery ball. It was recovered by Burleson of A. & M. who was promptly swarmed by the whole OU team. The Sooners held Burleson under the water until he let go of the pigskin.

Several irate fans from both sides jumped into the battle, thus adding to the general confusion. The officials scratched their heads in bewilderment, not knowing what to call or whom to call it on. What had started as a sane football contest had turned into a complete madhouse.

Ed Cook, an OU champion swimmer, grabbed the ball when the half-drowned Burleson released it and paddled toward pay dirt. But the Aggies closed in on him.

Here, Cook did the fanciest swimming of his career. He took a deep breath and dived like a submarine. Eleven Aggies dived after him, but they couldn't see him in the muddy water. Frustrated, they came up and spread out, ready to grab the ball-carrier when he surfaced.

Cook did surface, but by the time he did he was out of the Aggies' reach. He waded ashore and touched the ball down in the sand to score the whackiest touchdown ever recorded.

The Aggies, wet, shivering, and demoralized, didn't warm up throughout the rest of the game. They were literally "dunked" by the Sooners, 75-0.—*Wayne D. Mote*



KING OR NOTHING

Continued from page 9

mind and risked his life on the field of honor in the cause of royalty he now risked everything to raise the flag of battle against the British.

His finances dwindled as he moved in luxury and pomp from place to place. Women, dazzled by his royal title and apparent wealth, followed him. He went to Texas, to California, to Mexico, trying to sell his enormous holdings. Gossip whispered that his marriage with Flagler's daughter was at an end. But she leased a house in Riverside, California, and invited her desperate husband to join her there. At that time he was in Mexico, making a final effort to liquidate his *ranchos* there. He failed.

Was there nothing to do then, but return humbly to the woman whose father had scorned him? Nothing left but to admit defeat? To endure the contempt of commoners?

He set out for California, avoiding the grinning faces of porters. He got off the train at El Paso and went to a hotel in an effort to think things out.

It is certain that the father-in-law, who admired and respected the man he could not understand, would have taken him back tactfully and sympathetically. But the King of Trinidad could not accept charity from the man who had insulted him.

He sat alone, beaten. He looked into the smeared mirror at his worn face with its thin moustache and the silky tuft of beard below the lip. He examined his clothing, elegant on Fifth Avenue but grotesque on the dusty plains of Texas. He saw a king deserted. A stranger in a world of enemies. A Napoleon dragged down to the ridicule of the *canaille*—the low, common people.

Then he remembered his book on the *Aesthetics of Suicide*. His head came up. His eyes blazed with the old majesty. Tolerate the laughter of the world? Creep humbly back and endure the sniggers of the mob? Never! Accept defeat from the world that had dared call him adventurer, charlatan, fool? He laughed. A world that could not value his superiority! He spurned such a loathsome world!

The next morning, his servants, unable to rouse him, kicked the door in. Then they stopped and stared at the figure stretched on the bed like a king lying in state, the crown of Trinidad on his chest. Beside him lay a half emptied poison bottle and pinned to a chair was a letter to his wife.

Thus did King James I spurn the world that was not good enough for him. And here is the letter he wrote to the wife who still loved him enough to want him back:

My dearest—

No news from you, although you have had plenty of time to write. Harvey has written me that he has no one in view to buy my land. Well, I have tasted the cup of bitterness to the very dregs, but I do not complain. Goodby. I forgive you your conduct toward me and trust you will be able to forgive yourself. I prefer to be a dead gentleman to a living blackguard like your father.

In New York they found papers naming de la Boissiere regent of the Principality of Trinidad which, meanwhile, had been officially claimed by Brazil. Nevertheless, the old gentleman stood faithful all his life, lest the widow or children of the man he honored as his King lay claim to the Principality whose only subjects were screaming birds, turtles and landcrabs. •

BEWARE OF "MALE TROUBLE"

Continued from page 29

cases of prostate cancer have been fought by the last ditch technique of castrating the patient to shrink the gland and prevent further growth. But Dr. Charles Huggins, of the University of Chicago, found that doses of female sex hormone could produce the same results by neutralizing the male sex hormones. Although full recovery has taken place in only a minority of cases, almost all patients given this treatment have experienced rapid relief from pain, general physical improvement, and a longer life expectancy. In some instances, female sex hormones have reversed the cancer sufficiently to allow the gland to be removed.

Two years ago, Dr. Huggins scored another remarkable advance. He removed the adrenal glands of a man dying of prostate cancer. No one thought this patient would last a week, but he was kept going on synthetic cortisone pills and extra salt. Gradually his pain left, his strength returned and the cancer faded. Today he is alive and in good health. Other adrenal gland operations have shown a promising percentage of wins.

Perhaps the most significant news of all for prostate and other cancer sufferers comes from the Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore. Last year surgeons at this famous institution performed a bold surgical experiment: they removed the pituitary gland from a 72-year-old prostate cancer patient. Synthetic hormones kept this man alive for several months, during which time the removal of the pituitary slowed up the cancer. Unfortunately, the condition was too far advanced to prevent death.

Although diagnosis of prostate disorder is not always easy, there are several precautions we can all take to assure ourselves some protection. The first rule is to make certain of a physical examination at least once a year. This check-up should include a rectal examination.

If you have been suffering with a local infection anywhere in the body, including badly abscessed teeth, don't wait for the twelve-month physical.

Gonorrhea and other venereal diseases require special vigilance. They may seem to be cured, but lingering bacteria can injure the prostate. For this reason, physicals should be spaced not more than six months apart for at least two years following an infection. After syphilis, the six-month physical should be continued for 10 years, since this germ can damage the heart even after such an extended period.

Watch for warning signals—frequent or difficult urination, constant desire to pass water, burning sensations or pain in and around the genital area and rectum, and chronic backache.

Don't go in for self-diagnosis. So-called "bladder trouble" may or may not come from the prostate. Even the vaguest symptoms, always feeling logy and exhausted when you wake up, for example, may be caused by prostatitis, which puts a drag on the entire system. On the other hand, specific symptoms in the urinal tract don't necessarily mean prostate trouble. Water may be blocked by kidney or bladder stones, or by other ailments such as swelling of the urethra.

If you think you need diagnosis or treatment, don't fall for high pressure advertising. Because it is the leading form of "male trouble," prostate gland disorder has opened the doors to a wide variety of quack enterprises that promise quick and painless cures. Firms and "specialists" using unscientific techniques, chiropractics, for example, will "cure" you of something you don't have or will fail to detect the real thing. A reliable M.D. is your best bet. He is qualified to diagnose and treat prostate disturbance. In some instances he may refer you to a urologist who specializes in this type of disorder.

Be guided by a sane, realistic approach to whatever ailments you may have. The human body is not invincible, so don't try to laugh away every minor disturbance unless the doctor says you're okay. On the other hand, there's no need to get panicky and live with a thermometer in your mouth.

Your chances of avoiding misery below the belt-line are excellent, *if* you remember your prostate gland. If or when it starts giving you trouble, don't try to kid yourself and don't be a sucker for any of the quick cure patent medicines. See your doctor. •

BEST-SELLING NOVEL IN THIS ISSUE



BLACK WINGS HAS MY ANGEL

BY ELLIOTT CHAZE

CHAPTER ONE

I'd been roughnecking on a drilling rig in the Atchafayala River for better than sixteen weeks, racking the big silver stems of pipe, lugging the sacks of drilling mud from barge to shore, working with my back and guts and letting my mind coast. It needed a lot of coasting. Down around six thousand feet we twisted the pipe off in the hole and they abandoned the well, paid us off, and said to come back in two months, maybe three months.

Benson, the little cockeyed driller, told me I'd made him a good hand. He said most big men were sloppy and slow on a drilling rig, but that I used my weight the way a small man does, and when he put down the next wildcat he thought I'd be ready to work derrick. He said I was too good to waste "down on the floor with the mules," and he wanted me upstairs with the wind in my hair and an extra two bits an hour on my paycheck. It was all I could do to keep from laughing in his face.

Now the hot soapy water in the old-timey bathtub in the little hotel in Krotz Springs felt lovely.

I hadn't had a hot-water bath in almost four months. The soap was oily and fragrant and it slid down my chest making

little zeros of suds, each filled with the milky-green color of the water.

The bellhop beat on the door of the bedroom while I was still underwater in the tub. It surprised me that I could hear him. While I was drying, he began knocking again, and I had the towel wrapped around me when I reached the bedroom door opening onto the flea-bitten corridor with its cheese-colored walls.

"Here she is," he said.

And there she was. I guess I'll always remember the first time I saw her, standing there in the half-gloom of the corridor, with the country-town bellhop dressed like an organ-grinder's monkey, almost leaning against her, smirking.

"She's a looker, ain't she, Bub?"

Her eyes were lavender-gray and her hair was light creamy gold and springy-looking, hugging her head in curves rather than absolute curls. She wore a navy-blue beret of the kind you associate with European movies. Then there was the hair and face and a long loose stretch of metal-colored raincoat, very wet, and the cold smell of it plain in the mustiness. Then there were the legs and the bellhop wasn't kidding about them.

"For God's sake give him his dollar," she said, putting no feeling into it one way or the other.

I moved to the bureau and got the dollar and gave it to the bellhop. He smiled awfully and left, and she came in and shut the door and there we were in the room together, just like that. We weren't—and then we were. After sixteen weeks on a drilling rig, it is a lovely shock to find yourself with no mud in your ears, alone in a room with a young expensive-looking woman.

"Hello," she said, still putting nothing into it.

I think I grinned. I remember that the Buster Keaton act didn't seem to fit the loveliness of the face, didn't seem to fit it at all, and when she plumped down on the iron starch of the top sheet of the bed, it crackled comically.

I said, "I'd've worn a nicer towel if I'd known this was going to be formal."

"I'm tired," she said. Her hands were cupped against the aluminum-colored rubber of the raincoat over her knees. "Let's don't make jokes."

"All right."

"Never joke with a tired tramp," she said. "No one gets as tired as a tired tramp."

She shivered and said she could do with a drink. I sloshed her a bourbon on rocks, using the bathroom glass and what was left of the ice.

"It's good," she said, not making a face the way most women do with raw whisky.

"You mean it *was* good."

"I could do with another."

"From the looks of you, you could do with the whole fifth."

"Could do." She nodded. She looked me up and down. Not appraisingly or insultingly, but the way you look at a building or a mountain or an anthill, just looking. I stood there taking it, the thin grass carpet scratchy against the soles of my water-softened feet, looking back at her. I felt a laughable impulse to introduce myself and dig into the classic parlor patter of home towns and possible mutual friends and explain why I was wearing a towel and tell her the bellhop had me all wrong.

Instead I poured the drinks, this time mixed with tepid water.

The rain beat against the windows and against the tin roof of the hotel. It came down in hissing roars, then in whispers, then in loud shishes like sandpaper rubbed against wood.

I was up early next morning for more of the soap and water, and she came into the bathroom while I was still in the tub. She was dressed. She told me she was leaving and that it had been a nice night.

I hauled out of the tub and picked her up and carried her back into the bedroom and it was three days before we left the room, together. She said it was like the song we kept getting on the little bedside radio: "If You've Got the Money, Honey, I've Got the Time." The trashy tune and words sounded funny coming out of her in the Wellesley manner, in that imperceptibly clipped, ladylike voice.

"But when the money's gone," she said, "I'm gone, too. I don't sleep for thrills any more."

"Did you ever?"

She laughed. "Let's let it go at that; I just don't any more."

That was all right with me. After the months on the river I didn't feel finicky about the nuances of romance—all I wanted was plenty of it. At that time I had no more idea of falling in love with her than I had of making a meal of the big yellow cake of soap in the Victorian bathroom.

"When the money's gone," I told her. "I'll probably be sick of you."

"I hope so."

"Why?"

"It'll be better if you're sick of me."

But like I say, when we left the hotel we left it together, the funny-faced old bellhop toting our bags out to my Packard convertible, carrying the bags a block to the parking lot down by the river, smirking every foot of the way.

I gave him a dollar and then another fifty cents when he'd got the bags squared away in the square-tailed trunk of the car.

The Packard was none the worse for storage, and at Alexandria I stopped at a used-car lot and bought a pair of Louisiana tags with the white pelican on them. Just to play it safe. The man sold them fairly cheap and they had a nice comfortable shine to them after they were fitted into the nickeled frames.

Going across the Red River bridge, I sailed my Mississippi tags over the iron railing and saw them hit the water with a splash, forty feet below. She watched me, leaning back in her leather-padded corner, smoking quietly. Nothing seemed to surprise her: the car, the tags, the business of taking an uncharted trip with an unknown man. The wind whipped her bright hair the way it does in the soft-drink advertisements, cooperatively, beautifully. The cross-stripes of tar on the white highway thumped faster and faster beneath the wheels until the thumping became a buzzing. The air was soft, yet not dead. And over all of it lay the very good feeling of going somewhere.

CHAPTER TWO

In Dallas I got turned around somehow and drove out through a plush Home-and-Garden-Club kind of neighborhood, where all the houses were of long thin wafers of Roman brick or blotchy fieldstone and were set far back from the road, their picture windows shining like gold foil in the late sun. We passed what must have been some kind of club, and there were limber-legged young kids on a strip of fine clay, stroking brand-new white tennis balls with a beautiful laziness, their expensively coached strokes almost insolent. Then we came out of that part of town and there were some grubby youngsters batting an old gray ball around a gray asphalt court, a public one with ragged chicken-wire backstops. These kids played aggressively, jumpy and fast, the movements ugly and determined. They beat the ball as if they were killing a snake.

"It's funny," she said to me, "they can be playing the same game and yet an altogether different one. It's the money."

"Yes."

"Everything stinks without the money."

"Almost everything."

"Some day I'm going to wallow in it again. I'm going to strip down buck naked and bathe in cool green hundred-dollar bills."

"You said *again*."

"Did I?" She asked it teasingly.

"You tell *me*."

"What difference?"

"Oh, no difference," I said. "No difference at all. But you're a funny one, with your saddle-stitched shoes and your million-dollar luggage and half the time trying to talk like a ten-dollar tramp in that snooty voice. You're a comic."

"Don't be tiresome."

"That's what I mean, words like tiresome. I never in my life heard a tramp say tiresome."

She had lost interest. "Some day," she said, "I'm going to slosh around in hundred-dollar bills, new ones that've never been used before." She giggled, a small light sound against the heavy hum of the Packard. She was breathing oddly, her shoulders moving as if her lungs were upstairs there, in her shoulders. She wore a T shirt of some kind of cocoa toweling and when she leaned back hard against the seat it was a splendid thing to see. Her skirt was gray flannel and it fitted as if it had been smeared on her, and below it were the legs. You hear and read about legs. But when you see the really good ones, you know the things you read and heard were a lot of trash.

I threw back my head and laughed and we swerved left, almost hitting a battleship-gray Olds '98.

"Look at them," she said, "with their big prissy eight-thousand-a-year frowns."

She said she knew the man made eight thousand a year because he wore a button-down collar white oxford and when he frowned he did it just the way her eight-thousand-a-year uncle did it. As if he expected a bonus for it.

"That's not bad money," I said feeling her out.

"There's no bad money."

"Oh?"

"But, darling, you've got to have drifts of it, lumps of it, and little piles of it only make you sick and petty."

It was the first time she'd called me darling and it was the first time she'd made anything approaching a speech on this my favorite subject. I eyed her with new interest. You can say what you want, but really money-hungry people, ravenously money-hungry ones, are a society all to themselves. My plan had been to get enough of her and to leave her in some filling-station rest room between Dallas and Denver. I'd told her I was a salesman, that I sold novelties and notions to drugstores, and that the winter months were slack ones in the trade and I'd taken the roughnecking job on the river to tide me over.

That night we stopped at a barbecue stand where some kind of engine turned the beef ribs over and over, like a bloody Ferris wheel, over the charcoal fire. We ate slowly, washing down the greasy roasted meat with stingingly cold beer, and then we smoked and were quiet. I wanted some more potato salad and when we got it we decided to split it and get some more beer. The beer lasted longer than the salad. While we were finishing it, she moved over against me and I kissed her a long time, her lips cold and fresh and soft. She kissed the way an expert dancer follows the lead, giving and taking at exquisitely the right moment, and getting across the idea that she had a lot in reserve and this was only a sample. I'm not lying when I say I think that kiss lasted a quarter hour. But

"The dead man's plan worked perfectly. I had the dough and the armored car was down where they'd never find it.

"But I had added something to the plan—Virginia. Virginia with the face by Michelangelo and the body that could make a man forget all his vows.

"And Virginia was no girl to mix with a hundred grand."

I still planned to leave her in the ladies john of some filling station. Because you can't kiss your way out of prison and I knew that for sure. For dead sure. And even as I kissed her I remembered 'way back in the dim part of my brain how it had been in solitary at Mississippi's Parchman. In solitary they shove your food to you through a hinged slit in the bottom of the door, and you don't get to see anybody, not anybody at all. I used to kick the tray back out through the slit and curse them, hoping they'd come in and beat me. Anything to break the monotony. But they didn't come. I'd shadow-box to kill time. There was no window, only the yellow light bulb with the juices of bugs on it, and I never knew if it was day or night or rain or shine or Sunday or what. You can't kiss your way out of a place like that, and there's no barbecue, no cold beer in there.

Still, though, if she could drive the way she loved. . .

I gave her the wheel when we left the barbecue place and she curved out of the gravel drive as slick as anything you'd want to see. She handled the hydramatic shift without self-consciousness and she fed the heavy car the gas in a nice soft gush.

I smoked one more cigarette and went to sleep.

I felt the good padded leather cool against my shoulders and I slipped down along the ribs of the leather, my knees into the dash, and I was back at Parchman, everything gray, the stone, the men, the air. The yard birds were moving around in the big oval enclosure after lunch, waiting for work call. The oval was inside three balconied levels and there was Shorty, up there on the third level the way he'd been last summer, holding onto the gray iron rail guard and yelling. He began beating his chest as I knew he would and he climbed up there on the railing and teetered a long second and then he did a perfect swan dive. Sixty feet below, he hit the paving on his chest and chin. It made a noise like nothing you've ever heard. Not loud. Not soft. I ran toward him, but there was a crowd and I couldn't get in because they were cleaning up and rolling him in a tarpaulin and the only thing I ever saw of him after he landed was the darker gray business on the light gray stone. It was so exactly the way it had been, with Jeepie out on the edge of the sweating crowd trying to bum a smoke and Thompson crying and saying that Shorty used to be an AAU highboard diver and it was the best way for him to die—with everyone looking. Thompson said Shorty did that swan into the stone just as nicely as if the judges were scoring him on points: "You see the way he held his feet together and his back hollow?" They had to take Thompson off somewhere, but the next day in the leather-goods shop he was his same old gray self and he never mentioned Shorty again in any way that I remember.

The dream unraveled into raspberry lipstick and lavender-gray eyes with speckles in them and a swirl of baby-smelling hair and the song on the radio: "If You've Got the Money, Honey, I've Got the Time." And then it looped back to the prison without any kind of transition or tapering. We wore the smutty blue uniforms of the guards and there was blood, sticky and fresh, on the left cuff of my stolen jacket, and we were walking toward the cement wall with the wooden ladder, Jeepie on the front end, me in the middle, and Thompson on the tail of the ladder. The light came down in a long clear tube from the lookout's post. It wavered behind us, curved beyond us, and then settled down on us. I could almost feel the cold heat of it and my eyes ached from the glare and my whole body ached from waiting to be shot. The lookout said in an oddly conversational tone, "Who goes?" And Thompson waved up at the tower, and said, "It's all right. It's O.K." Then we were wedging the ladder against the concrete, the light from the tower still full on us, sparking against the quartz sand in the wall. Thompson and I were up and over the wall, and it was almost cold in the darkness on the other side, cold and quiet. I looked up and Jeepie was hanging up there with his belly against the stone. He was golden with the light and I could see his face and the forked vein high on his head. And there came a rattling from the tower, not a deadly sound or a dramatic one, a commonplace rattling like someone shaking rocks in a cigar box. And Jeepie's face became a tangle of shining black, a modernistic tangle of fluid and flesh where the bullets from the tower tore into it. It was still a face, but you couldn't tell where the eyes and mouth had been before the gun began rattling in the tower; then it wasn't a face at all and Thompson and I were running away from the wall.

I jumped, and when I opened my eyes she was pulling wide and to the left, smoothly, around a yellow diesel truck. We missed the truck by a good two inches and slid along and around it as if it were buttered, and she kicked the Packard up to eighty-five. I yawned and scratched my head, began looking for my cigarettes.

Having her at the wheel gave me a good feeling. She kept the left front fender pasted to the center stripe of the road, grooving it as if it were a rail. I fell asleep before I ever found the cigarettes. I dreamed again and this time Jeepie was talking all through it. His big plan. How many times I'd heard it. But he was talking now through the mouth the machine gun made for him and the words were squashed and wet. He said the first thing you had to do was buy yourself a trailer, a very harmless-looking one, wide in the beam, wide as the law would allow and maybe a little wider. It should be at least thirty-three feet long, he said, and the kind of trailer that didn't glitter or interest anyone. It had to be a boring kind of trailer, with a lived-in look, reeking of domesticity. It had to be a trailer with a few dents in it here and there and an old-fashioned hitch, no hydraulic gadgets for Jeepie and the big plan that died with him on top the wall. And, most important of all, the trailer must be like a box, with a straight, sturdy rear wall. The rear wall was the thing of things and Jeepie said wetly, with his poor bullet-made mouth, that if the wall was not right, none of it was right.

In Wichita Falls we made our first real stop, staying there three days in a dark lazy hotel with high-ceilinged rooms and clean, tiled baths. I got rid of the last hints of the mud moons under my fingernails, and between us we got rid of three fifths of I. W. Harper. After the second day I felt as limber and light-legged as a goose and I was tired of eating in the room and so was she, so we went downtown and ate a couple of gray steaks in a place with a fine enameled front which advertised steaks as a specialty of the house.

After dinner we stopped at a jewelry shop and bought her a plain white-gold wedding ring. She wore no polish on the long round fingers and that somehow made them appear more nude, and the jewelry clerk seemed to have himself a hard time making up his mind to let go of them after he slipped on the ring. Maybe the ring was a laugh, and maybe it wasn't. Because, after all, we were going to be rooming together, at least until I left her, and hotel people are funny about slick fingers.

Then we went to a department store and I bought her a pink girdle that had wide panels in it and was several sizes too big for her. The panels were important, as important on a smaller scale as the sturdy rear wall of Jeepie's trailer. We bought her some jeans, too. And it was a good thing to see her trying on the jeans in front of the three-way mirror. She was all of a long slim golden piece, but there were sockets, too, like you see in *Vogue*, where the women by simply sticking out a leg in a certain way can make a denim rag look like something you ought to eat. The saleswomen in ladies' ready-to-wear cooed and giggled and smoothed, and she treated them with an easy friendliness.

With the jeans, she got a denim jacket that would have looked like a maternity smock on anyone else. On her it was alive and you could tell where she was and where she wasn't under all that coarse cloth. The expensive preoccupied smile dissolved and the eyes had a tilt to them and she practically dunked herself in the mirrors, the wedding ring shining like six million dollars.

That night, our last one in Wichita Falls, she ripped the machine-stitched threads from the girdle and sewed seventeen hundred-dollar bills into the panels. In each of three panels there were four bills, and in the fourth there were five. The money represented everything I'd made on the drilling rig on the Atchafayala River, plus a little I'd picked up here and there before I began roughnecking. It wasn't a lot, but I had a horror of being broke. I've always had this feeling about being without money. And there's this about a woman's girdle: it makes you think of various things, but none of these things is money. I told her we'd keep the girdle in the glove compartment of the Packard since, with her figure, she certainly didn't need it, and since, as I've said, I planned to ditch her at the right time and place.

I still had almost a hundred in my billfold and figured it would be more than enough to get us to Denver. We'd need the other money there. And if we used it right, or rather, if I used it right, I'd be living high on the hog for a long, long time.

Since the two of us left Krotz Springs I'd begin thinking occasionally in terms of "we." It irritated me; it smelled of softness, and I wanted none of it. Yet it kept popping up in my plans and making me madder and madder, so that by the time we reached Raton, New Mexico, I decided it was time to jettison my friend with the cream-colored hair.

It proved so simple as to be almost disappointing.

On the outskirts of Raton, at the foot of the mountain pass, we pulled into this cafe-filling-station place and went inside for coffee.

We'd seen the empty Greyhound bus out front and the cafe was jammed with bus passengers. They were eating sandwiches and drinking coffee in the quick listless way people do when they've been told they have only fifteen minutes to spruce up and get themselves fed.

When we came in, the noise quieted, the men looking at her, the single ones staring and the married ones looking out the sides of their eyes as if it didn't matter too much to them about her being there. But looking just the same. There was no arguing that she had it, and that whatever it was, she beamed it out solid and steady as a revolving beacon. And if you didn't actually see it, you still felt the warmth of it and wondered.

I took her arm, hating myself for the silly sheltering gesture, and said, "Let's get a drink first." There was less of a crowd at the bar than at the food counter.

She wrinkled her nose. "I think we've been drinking too much. To enjoy drinking, you've got to *not* drink for a while. Contrast."

"You be contrasty, I'm having a drink."

There was a medium-young fellow on one of the white stools at the food counter, and as we talked, he swung around to watch her. He had thick bluish-black Hollywood sideburns and he wore a suit that was too tweedy and New England for the month of May in New Mexico. It had so many flap pockets on the jacket that he looked like a ventilator.

She made a pretty show of looking through her purse for something, pouting the way a woman with a good mouth can pout. Then she said she was going out to the car to get cigarettes from where she'd left them on the seat and she'd be right back and for me to go ahead with the drink and she would join me. She gave me a radiant smile and the door slammed behind her and then I was ordering my I. W. Harper at the varnished bar. As smiles go, the one she'd given me was a fine one, but it was cold, too, if you know what I mean, plenty of stretch in the lips but no eyes or heart in it. The double shot hit bottom with a gentle explosion at about the same time she returned to the cafe.

She strolled to a vacant stool at the food counter and the Hollywood sideburns began taking bites out of her with his eyes. He sat to her left. There was a fat woman in a little-girl dress of checkered cotton between them, but he leaned forward and twisted and stared.

The bus passengers began filing out, some of them taking pieces of sandwiches and cookies with them.

I had another drink and when I looked around again the fat woman was gone and this tweedy joker with the pockets flapping all over him was talking to my passenger. She wasn't saying anything. But then again she wasn't shrinking, and it hit me that now was as good a time as any to chop the thing off clean, to leave her there on the porcelain stool and get the hell on to Denver. The bartender was looking at me strangely, half amused and half worried.

I moved away from the bar and to the door, very slowly, and she didn't turn.

The Packard kicked off nicely, and when I got the wheels out of the gravel and onto the road I pushed her hard for maybe a minute, whistling, "If You've Got the Money, Honey, I've Got the Time." Before it had sounded whimsical and frank and functional. Before it had sounded gay and uncomplicated. Now the tune had a nasty taste to it.

"Well," I said to the dashboard, "*I've* got the money and *I've* got the time."

I laughed and the hot New Mexico wind blew it out of my mouth and out the window before it started. I threw back my head and laughed louder, but it didn't come off any better. I pulled over to the side of the road to get at my extra cigarettes in the glove compartment. The five packs were in there, along with a miniature flashlight I used in my work, and the .357 Magnum Smith and Wesson revolver. But the thing that wasn't in there where it belonged was the pink girdle we'd bought in Wichita Falls.

Stuff was stacked all around the place where the girdle had been folded. I never saw a bigger, blacker hole than the one in there where the girdle had been.

I sat without moving, my fist in the glove compartment, my mouth hanging open. The back of my fist was sweating. I forced myself to think back deliberately, very deliberately, to her leaving the cafe, and then to how she came back, her tiny bag swinging from the slim strap over her wrist. You couldn't stuff a girdle in a handbag no bigger than hamburger. And she'd been just as cool as a cantaloupe, sitting there at the counter, her cheek half turned to that guy; picture of a lady more interested in a ham sandwich than in anything else in the world. She had more than six thousand ham sandwiches in that girdle. And she had the girdle on. The cold-blooded little blonde was crackling with my hundred-dollar bills.

I don't remember jerking the car around in the road and heading back to Raton. I don't remember the ride at all.

The bus was no longer in front of the café and there were no cars there. There was an old fellow, wearing puffy pants like the Canadian Royal Mounties, standing beside the lone gas pump, beating on it with his hand as if something had gone wrong with the dial that registered the gallons. He paid no attention to me, and when I came out of the place he was still slapping at the pump.

"Uncle, have you seen a blonde in jean and a man about my height in a brown suit?'

Whap! He slapped the glass face of the gauge, ignoring me.

"A brown hairy suit?" I went on. "I asked inside and they told me this blonde left with the man in the brown suit, and I've got to find them quick because her mother is sick and wants her to come right away." My tongue felt thick and dry.

Tunk, tunk, tunk. He hit the metal part of the pump with the heel of his hand.

I reached out and grabbed him by the front of his shirt and lifted him up against me, and said, "Listen, damn you, if you don't tell me whether you saw my girl go off with that punk in the brown suit—"

"Why didn't you say so, son?" he said in a reasonable voice. "I didn't know she was your girl."

"Which way'd they go? And in what?"

"Wal, her and this *hombre* jumped into one a them low-down Englishy things without no top—he had it parked over yonder in the shade—and they sat there arguin' a bit and seemed like fer a while she was goin' to climb back right smack outa that car."

"Spare me the Western color, Uncle. What color was the car? And which way?"

"Thataway." He seemed disappointed. "I think it was purple, blackish purple."

I retraced the road we'd taken from Cartersville to Raton, moving along at a brisk clip but not too fast to check the sweep of flat fawn-colored land to either side of the highway. The .357 Magnum was in my lap and I picked it up and thumbed the cylinder release so that the cylinder swung out to the left, heavy with its load of brass and lead.

I dumped the cartridges out in the V of my legs against the leather of the seat and, still driving, I flipped the cylinder back into anchorage and dry-fired the gun at the windshield. The double action was nice and oily, with just enough tension and delay. The .357 Magnum is a work of art, just about the size and bore of a .38 caliber, but with approximately double the power of penetration. It is a fancy-shooting, but not a fancy-looking gun, and if you lay it on something and squeeze it off slowly, that something is going to fall.

I refilled the chambers with one hand and pushed the gun in the waistband of my pants and buttoned my coat over it. By this time I'd hit the edge of Cartersville, a town of typical flat-topped Indian-style houses and little curio shops with signs saying: "COME IN AND SEE GIANT MAN-KILLING

LIZARD," and "SEE THE MAN-DESTROYING RATTLESNAKE," and "REAL LIVE COBRA—COBRAS KILL A MAN EVERY HOUR IN INDIA."

Virginia had told me—did I tell you her name was Virginia?—that one summer she visited her brother in Albuquerque and he explained how the signs worked. Most of the lizards and snakes were stuffed. But the signs were interesting, and after you stopped and went inside the curio shop and saw all the beaten coin-silver splashed with turquoise and obsidian you were likely to buy yourself twenty or thirty dollars worth of Zuni bracelets. She said the snakes and lizards were no more dishonest than the stinking dead whales in carnival side shows and, anyway, the lizards led you to the Zuni jewelry and it was very good. Imaginative and delicate, not a bit like the sluggish squares and ovals and swastikas the Pueblo tribe turns out. Well, she had enough folding money in the girdle to buy herself a turquoise igloo, or hogan, or whatever it is they live in out there. The gun felt solid and warm lying against my leg.

Just inside the town, to the right of the road, I saw this sprawling adobe building rimmed with neon tubing, and a sign out front advertising steaks and drinks and dancing. The neon tubing was very dead and curly in the sun-light, like old fingernail parings pasted against the mud.

There were three cars in the drive, two Buicks and a plum-colored XK-120 Jaguar sports job.

Inside, it was hot, but the gloom gave an illusion of semicoolness and it was a moment or so before the holes in my eyes opened up enough to let me see anything much. They were in a booth, sipping some kind of crushed-ice things through straws, the Hollywood sideburns talking fast and low between sips. She was listening, but not making an exercise of it.

Beyond them, in a corner of the room, was a jukebox framed and ornamented with neon, squirting salmon-and-white light into the artificial twilight of the room. Some high-powered thrush was skipping through "Kiss of Fire," singing it fast and impatiently, as if she had to catch a train. I moved across what must have been the dance floor and then I was sitting there in the booth beside her, looking across the table at her friend. He stopped talking and concentrated on me and the drink. I reached across the table and took the drink from him, threw the straw on the floor, and drank whatever it was in the glass.

He put his elbows on the table and thought about it. Virginia kept sipping.

I didn't like the drink and said so. He balled his fist, a large one and nicely tanned, but then he scratched his head with his knuckles, lightly, careful not to dislodge any of the thick hairdo. Then he thought about it some more.

"Tim," Virginia said sweetly, "this is Nick something-or-other."

No one said anything.

"And, Nick," Virginia finally said to her friend, "this is Tim. You may call him Timothy."

I chewed a cheekful of the perfumed ice from the glass before saying: "This is really shaping up as a party."

"Fine," Nick said, turning to Virginia. "And he may call me Nicholas."

"I know we're going to have a good time," I said. "I can feel it coming on." The ice made a lot of noise. The thrush in the jukebox became wilder and wilder and there was a thumping as if she were hurling herself against the plastic walls of the box. She went off the air in a series of clicks and metallic hiccups and was replaced by a sleepy Negroid voice, this one male, yawning its way through "Tenderly." Or maybe it was "Rhapsody."



"No thanks, I'm just looking."

After all, it's been a long time and a lot of hell and happiness in between.

"I don't think this is going to do," Nick said finally. "I don't think it's going to do at all." He was swelling up to fill his coat, coming up off the bench of the booth by degrees. You could tell from the look on his face that he considered this psychological warfare at its best. Virginia just sipped away, not raising her eyes. Nick began sliding around the corner of the table, now very business-like and quick, until he happened to look down at the edge of the table near my belly and he saw the working end of the .357 Magnum resting there. He laughed and plopped down on the bench. "That's different," he said.

I bumped the snout of the gun daintily on the table. "Oh my, yes, it's altogether different."

"Isn't it?" Virginia said, filling the two words with amusement and contempt.

"Nicholas," I said, "I want you to wipe your chin and go out there and get in your Jaguar and start rolling."

Virginia did something with her glass, rattling the ice. "Once at Krotz Springs I told Tim he looked a great deal like a great big John Garfield, and I don't think he ever will get over it. Now he even gets into his undershirts like John Garfield. He even sweats like John Garfield, with a nice photogenic shine." She giggled.

"Garfield's dead," Nick said.

I bumped the gun on the table, a little harder this time. "Nicholas, I want to apologize for the short honeymoon, and I'll be seeing you. They tell me a Jaguar will do eighty-five in second gear."

Virginia giggled again, saying, "Oh, yes, we'll be seeing you. You must visit us in Krotz Springs during the oil-well season."

Then we were outside, Nick walking ahead of us and getting into the plum-painted Jaguar without looking at Virginia. He did not do eighty-five in second, but then again he did not mess around, and I imagine the cheap white-gold wedding ring must have been almost as big in his mind as the gun. The insides of my arms felt clammy and my ribs prickled with relief. What I'd wanted least at this point was trouble, trouble of any kind, with anybody. All my plans hinged on remaining as unnoticed as possible, anyway as unnoticed as you could be with a woman like Virginia along. As she climbed into the Packard I slapped her on the rump, making it look playful and marital in case anyone was watching from the front door of the adobe building.

I breathed easier then. She was wearing it—the girdle.

We turned around and headed again for Raton Pass, not stopping this time at Raton, but going on until the road widened and smoothed out for the long climb over the mountains and into Colorado.

We crossed the pass and stopped for gas in Trinidad, Colorado, and Virginia said she wanted to go to the ladies room, but I said no, we'd go on down the road a piece and find us a cabin. She laughed and didn't argue.

On the other side of Trinidad, at about dusk, I saw the kind of place I'd been looking for, a rough little road that bent off to

the left. I swung onto it and bumped along a quarter mile or more making sure it didn't lead to a roadside park or anything else that would attract people. I braked to a halt, left the lights blazing against a blank red wall of rock. The light bounced back in the car under the canvas top and I could see she was grinning. She said, "The girdle?"

"Yes, ma'am."

She lit a cigarette. "No, Tim, I don't think so." The smoke curled around the words. "You're so damned complacent I think I'll make you work for it."

"That's all right."

I pushed my arm between her back and the seat and began pulling her to me and she hit me in the mouth with her right fist, hard. I tasted blood, and then she was out of the car and running. She ran maybe twenty yards and kicked off her shoes and then she really ran. Up the slope and beyond the spray of the headlights, moving neat and swift as a boy. The girdle didn't seem to slow her. She cleared a fairly big rock just beyond the edge of the light and I piled out and started after her.

We were running through knee-high stuff which had a rubbery feel to it when I caught up with her and tackled her and we both balled up in the stuff when we fell, Virginia laughing as if it were the funniest thing in the world to be out there on the mountain in the moonlight fighting over a new girdle. She tried to hit me again, but this time I blocked it with my wrist and slapped her high on the cheek. She kept struggling and I hit her again, lower, on the side of the neck.

Then she began fighting in earnest. It scared me.

I didn't want to cut loose and belt her, but I had to have the money. I knew if I hit her in the throat or on the bridge of the nose or even on the temple, I might cave the bone and kill her. I didn't want to leave any dead woman up there in the rocks. All I wanted was quiet, and to go on to Denver and get me the kind of trailer Jeepie said you ought to get if you wanted to be rich. But she kept rattling those hard little fists off the side of my head and beating me in the face. I weighed in the neighborhood of a hundred and ninety-eight, and I don't guess she'd've weighed in at more than a hundred and eighteen if the girdle had been loaded with silver dollars. But trying to strip the thing off her was like trying to skin a baby python with a sledge hammer for a head.

It was a long time before I even got her out of the jeans.

I'd wedged my fingertips under the rubber then, the backs of my knuckles digging roughly into her, but the girdle refused to start rolling. Then suddenly she bridged her back and I jerked very fast, so that the stretchy material came down and over my thumbs. After that it was easier, but I was still taking a hell of a beating and once she drove her knee against my nose and the darkness buzzed with off-color lights. It was too much. When I had the girdle clear of her bare feet I reared up on my knees and hit her, putting all the pain of my nose into it. She kept moving around and I slammed my fist into her face again and I didn't care if the whole FBI was hiding in the rocks with a portable electric chair.

She pulled me down against her in the strange tall mountain bushes where I'd tackled her.

And when I rolled over on my back that great big chamber-of-commerce moon was curdled with purest gold.

CHAPTER THREE

We spent the night in Pueblo. We split our drinks, pouring only one at a time and sharing it till it was gone, and swapping the ice back and forth from her mouth to mine. We laughed at ourselves and how the girdle, still packed with the money, hung from the overhead light fixture. The fixture was one of those hideous three-pronged ones, covered with steel leaves which were painted in various tones of mildew. The girdle was speared on one of the sharp leaves and cast a shadow across her.

In the daylight we reviewed the damage, too tired and sick to think it funny; but not too sick to eat the sausage and eggs and toast at the little restaurant that was part of the tourist court. Her right eye was puffed and her lips were bruised and cut. My nose was swollen and bloodshot where she'd banged me with her knee on the mountain. Furthermore, during the four or five hours we'd slept she had chilled out again, and she looked across the coffee cup at me as if we'd just been introduced and she hadn't quite made up her mind about me. Most of the time we were at breakfast she was reading the morning paper, the Pueblo Chieftain, sticking to the front page of it. There was a big black splash about the New York district attorney rooting into a call-girl syndicate where the girls received as much as five hundred dollars a night for their favors. And there was a large picture of a babe with a knockout figure and a polka-dotted shawl or something over her face. I'd bought the paper and glanced at it before giving it to Virginia. At the time I thought her interest in the story was mostly because of the money angle.

There was no talk.

I paid the check and tipped the waitress, who was hanging over the table like a fat starched cloud. I smiled at Virginia and she folded up the newspaper. The car ran nicely and the girdle was locked in the glove compartment with the gun and cigarettes. It was a fine day, we were free and on the move, and aside from this, I'd made a fairly important decision about her. I'd decided she was cocky and cool enough to help me with the trailer and the rest; and what with her ability to drive an automobile, and her guts, between the two of us we had a better than fair chance of swinging Jeepie's wonderful plan. He'd always said the plan called for two people, one on the waiting end, one on the dying end. Well, I had two people. Me and Virginia. And, God knows, the job, if handled without faltering at any stage of it, would net a big enough haul for a whole platoon of people. Jeepie always thought in hundreds of thousands of dollars. He looked like a shine boy and he thought in hundreds of thousands. Virginia would be on the waiting end. I didn't mind the dying end. Because back there I never thought about how a man could die by the clock and calendar, ticking off the days and the minutes as if he were waiting to have a baby. When I thought of dying there was a lot of noise in it and then blackness, no different than any other blackness but more complete and lasting. The way I had it doped, dying was pretty stagy and certainly not lonely.

So, the worst that could happen for me would be a good long sleep, this on the heels of a blaring final scene, replete with smell of cordite and criminal courage. And the worst for Virginia would be life in some state pen, guilty of conspiracy and subject therefore to the death penalty, but with the kind of legs and eyes juries do not like to burn. She would pull no trigger, swing no knife. She would wait—and drive. And life sentences have a way of becoming ten- or twenty-year sentences in the land of the free and the home of the brave. Five good soggy editorials would do it. Five painstaking interviews with the lady with the lavender-gray eyes, who knew her boy friend wasn't exactly legal, but who never thought he'd kill anybody for a dirty old mess of money. Parole for Virginia. More men for Virginia. Probably rich men, the kind who must have bought her the handbag with the lump of tortoise shell on it and the good shoes. And she'd treat them, too, like a gourmet chewing a hunk of stale bread. Or would she?

What in the devil had hounded her into taking a ten-dollar-a-call job in a backwoods hotel? She was running, too, but from what?

I found a parking space half a block from a sporting goods store, killed the engine, and removed the key from the ignition. It was midmorning and the sidewalk was nice and empty and I enjoyed the way it felt under my feet.

I told the man in the store what I wanted and he said he had just the thing I had in mind, a real goose-down sleeping bag with room for two, and that if the price was too stiff, he had some reclaimed single-sleeper Army bags with brown blanket linings. I told him the new civilian goose-down bag was fine. I liked the way it was quilted so the feathers would shift around beneath the cloth.

He bundled the bag in brown paper and twine, rolling it small and tight in the package, and before I left he managed to sell me a Rogers pocketknife with a buckhorn handle and Sheffield steel blades. I didn't need the knife, but I've always liked to buy good things whether I need them or not, and the knife was like that.

The sleeping bag was something else. I figured since both of us were wearing lumpy faces it would be best not to stop at any hotels or cabins. You generally notice the face of a person who's been in a fight, no matter how uninteresting the face. Scatter a few lumps on it and you remember all the rest of it. Of course we'd have to stop now and then for food, but I could buy it in batches at country stores and make it last a long time.

The fewer persons who saw our bruised faces, the better for Virginia and me. We'd likely be coming back over this same road in a month or so.

I bought a fly rod and a few lures and some tackle and I bought a black Plumb hatchet in a soft leather case, and by the time I got back to the car she was dozing, the newspaper spread on her lap. I stowed the stuff in back as quietly as I could and rolled on down the street a couple of blocks and stopped again. There was a Kress store and next to it a cash-and-carry grocery. I picked up what we needed and when I came back she was smoking and looking at the Pan-Am map of Colorado, tapping it with one of those long nude-looking fingernails and now and then staring out the window as if she were a million miles away. She didn't watch me as I put away the frying pans and the lard and the rest of the stuff.

"Baby," I said, "we're going to do us some camping until our faces grow together."

She scratched the map absently. "And why do we want our faces grown together?"

"I mean in one piece. Mine in one piece and yours in one piece."

"Well," she said, "I'm in no hurry. I'm no camper, but I'm in no hurry."

"Good."

"But if you're dead set on crawling off in the rocks and munching wild locusts and licking your wounds, this looks like a good place for it." She was tapping the map again, and I slowed the car and saw that she was tapping a tiny-printed place, fuzzy with the markings the map people make to represent mountains. I liked the way it sounded—Cripple Creek. It sounded right for us.

"I had a friend," she went on, "who spent a whole summer there and came back raving about it. She said they had only one hotel. The Imperial, I believe. And that early every morning the people in the hotel took little miners picks out in the rocks and hacked

away looking for gold until they were hungry. And then they ate what she called a prospector's breakfast. Fried burro meat and scrambled eggs."

"No one fries burro meat," I broke in, laughing.

"Maybe it was bacon. Anyway they beat on the rocks until they were starved and then they cooked and ate outdoors and went around climbing over old heaps of slag and mine tailings and peering down abandoned mine shafts."

"We don't want to stop at a hotel, that's what I was trying to tell you a while ago."

"And at night they sat around the lobby staring at their rocks."

"Fine."

"Or they went down in the basement of the hotel and watched an old-timey melodrama and got drunk and threw popcorn at the villain, who was a student at Cornell in the winters."

"No hotel for us."

I wasn't thinking of what I was saying now. I was thinking of what she said about *peering down abandoned mine shafts.* It answered a question that had been nibbling away at the edges of my mind ever since I decided to buy the trailer. If such a shaft happened to be in a lonely enough spot, and if it was big enough and deep enough and dark enough— But this much was certain: I'd want to do a little peering myself before I fitted it into the plan. One crooked piece in the puzzle and it would blow up in my face. Yet if I played it cold and smart, the good fat life was waiting for me. Five hundred, or five million dollars, the penalty for stealing it is the same, and it's better to do your thinking beforehand than afterward. If you can . . .

We left the main road at Colorado Springs and took to the mountains, the evening breeze cool and dry with a fresh spank to it. The road changed from concrete to crushed rock and later to gravel, with long irregular splotches of macadam. There was the damnedest sunset, smeared like sirup of opals over everything and dripping off the clouds the way the molten metal comes out of the ladle in a steel mill.

It lit up Virginia's face and filled the car with pink. She was reading the front page of the Pueblo newspaper again and I wondered how she could keep her mind on it in that fine sea of pinkness and with so much to look at outside the car.

And from time to time I kept thinking of the abandoned mine shafts. There must be some kind of trail leading to them. Some way to get in and out of the old locations. When you tore gold out of the ground you had to go somewhere with it. I'd read that some of the historic shafts in Colorado were so deep you could drop a pebble in them and light a cigarette before the pebble hit the water down there in the darkness. Or maybe that was in Montana. Sometimes people fell in them and were pulled on down and down into the underground workings, lost in a maze of water-filled tunnels, bobbling through eternity. No fish to eat them, though. Probably preserved in the ice water in that insane and forgotten blackness.

I looked around at Virginia to ask her to light me a cigarette. She was watching me, the folded paper in her lap. There seemed to be a certain agitation in her, but something deeper than her standard petulance, very little of it on the surface.

I smiled. "What's the matter?"

"I don't know," she said, shivering. "But I think you know. Isn't that funny?"

"Yes."

"I was just sitting here reading and then I started thinking again about Cripple Creek and that little hotel. I was wondering how it felt to throw popcorn at the villain. And then the goose flesh popped out and the look on your face was all tied up with it."

I reached over and patted the back of her hand. She pulled away—her hand was cold. Mental telepathy? You tell me. All I know is Virginia's hand was cold and she didn't want me touching it. When she lit the cigarette for me, she passed it in such a way that our fingers didn't meet, and she kept watching me as long as there was any of the sunset left inside the car.

The road into Cripple Creek from Colorado Springs is a winding one with tightly bent horseshoes on three or four different levels before you reach the town in its green cup of valley. There is something crazy and happy and careless about the air and I don't think anybody can be gloomy up there for long, no matter how strange and big are their plans. In the twilight we got none of its color that first night, but it is very beautiful and the kind of country that is all tip-tilted, half of it standing on edge so you can really see its creases and ravines and spaces. If there is any place in the West that is almost as fine as the South, it is Cripple Creek and the country around it. The sun dropped beyond the rock rim while we were still an eighth of a mile above the town. We could see the yellow lights down there, most of them hugging the ground, but a few sticking up higher and Virginia said that must be the Imperial Hotel.

There was a kind of half-circle gouged in the side of the mountain at one point, where the road was maybe five times as wide. To the left of this curved space, a thinner road climbed into the dark.

We spent that first night up there.

CHAPTER FOUR

I found some dead piñon wood and built a small fire in a hollow rock and then I got the hatchet and frying pans and coffee pot and bacon and eggs out of the back of the car and placed all these things in a neat row around the edge of the rock. Piñon wood has a lovely smell when it burns. With the hatchet I chopped an armload of it and brought it back and stacked it at the base of the rock. The rock was about three feet across at the top where the hollow part held the fire. It was almost waist-high. When the wind blew over the hollow the flames lay down against the coals and then they stood up and flapped and you could hear them, like cloth fluttering in the wind.

Virginia seemed very tired, and before I laid the skillet on the coals I pulled the new sleeping bag out of the car and fixed it for her a half-dozen paces from the fire where a baby cliff of stone leaned out over the little clearing. She crawled into the bag without undressing.

Twice that night I touched her and each time she moved away from me.

Toward midnight I was hungry again and I piled out of the bag and found some bologna and bread. Up there in those mountains your belly feels brand new, like you never used it before and can never get it full, and that stuff tasted like smoked turkey and biscuits. I washed it down with tepid coffee and walked around a while. A hundred yards up a crooked foot trail I found a fast shallow creek. Because of the wind you couldn't hear it until you were right on it. The water was all purple and brass and silver in the moonlight. I lay down and drank from the creek.

I went back to camp and poured the coffee I'd bought at the store into one of the inner sheets of the newspaper Virginia brought from Pueblo. I wrapped the loose coffee, folding it firmly in the sheet of paper so the grains of coffee would not spill. I took the shiny empty can up the grade to the creek and rinsed it, smelling it until it smelled only of water, then filling it with the freezing water and taking it to Virginia. She wasn't asleep. She drank half the can, pushed it away, and lay down and rolled over, without speaking.

After that I picked up the rest of the newspaper and took it in the car and read the front page again, using for light the tiny torch that hung from the ring with my car keys. The streamer story said that the New York D. A. believed there were two or three other call girls who had been forewarned of the crackdown on the syndicate, and who had left New York a few days before the raids began.

And farther down there was a piece that read:

One of the girls still sought by the law, the district attorney said, is a prominent figure in local café society, and reputedly the former mistress of a big-time underworld figure.

The district attorney declined to give her name but described her as a blonde with violet eyes, an elegant manner, and a figure to match.

He said she was last seen by the doorman at her plush apartment house on Beekman Place, climbing into a taxi and "apparently in quite a hurry." The doorman said she took two bags with her and gave Grand Central station to the driver as her point of destination. . . .

I folded the paper carefully into a compact square and locked it in the glove compartment with the girdle and the cigarettes and the gun. The wind had quieted when I fell asleep.

I woke up about a quarter to five and the light was already good, pale and steady without a hint of breeze. I eased out of the bag and stood there a minute looking down at her, then put on my pants and shoes and went to the car for the cheap fly rod and tackle and the other things, careful not to slam the door of the car. I tucked the gun in my waistband. I cut the money from the panels in the girdle and folded the bills into the hip pocket of my pants. Just in case. Then I relocked the glove compartment.

Wading the stream was not unpleasant. It was clear and for a while it didn't reach above my knees. It was cold, but a good clean cold, and the sun had begun warming the tips of the mountains. After more than a quarter-hour I came to a pool scalloped out of the living rock. I rigged the rod and flexed it. After a couple of experimental casts halfway across the pool I laid one near the far edge of it, close to an overhang of dark granite, exactly where I wanted it. Dropping the fly just where you want it is half the fun. And I can say it without bragging, that when you put a Southern fly fisherman out there in those wide-open Western streams with no bushes or branches overhead and nothing to do but hit the target, he will hit it. Even though I put the fly where I wanted it, nothing happened. I whipped it out there again and this time a rainbow took it in a smooth silver rush, spit it out, and left me.

He must have told his friends about me. Another half-hour netted me nothing but two shoefuls of water.

Finally I'd had enough of it and climbed out. I moved around the pool on the bank to the granite overhang and there were rough notches up the rim of it like stairs and you could see the sun was steaming hot up top, some forty feet above the surface of the pool, a fine place to dry my shoes and socks.

If I took my time maybe Virginia would cook breakfast, although she looked less like a cooker of breakfasts than anyone I ever knew. I reviewed the night before and the way she hadn't even thanked me for the water. My stomach growled. I decided if she were cooking her own meal when I returned

I'd take it away from her and eat it. She was a lousy little tramp. God knows I'm an authority on tramps.

I whipped most of the sand and water out of my socks against the rock, then pasted them against it and drained my shoes, the brown dye coming out of the shoes with the water. There was a long spread of valley north of Cripple Creek and although I couldn't see the town from where I sat I could feel it, and I could see the final kink in the road where it bent into town. To the west of me, maybe two hundred yards, there was a pile of slag glinting in the sun, only I didn't know it was slag at that time. And there was a weather-bleached outbuilding of some kind, tall and skinny and leaning, and some rusted machinery, a wheel of some kind in a tangle of cable near the building.

The wet shoes were warm and not too squishy as I came down off my perch.

The closer I got to the old building the less sense it made to me, until I saw the yawning mouth of the shaft, its edges crumbling in the sun. Then I knew what it was. Ten yards from the hole I laid down the rod and slipped the gun out of my pants, laying it beside the rod, and edged forward on all fours.

There seemed to be an updraft, a current of air rising from the shaft, and I could feel it against my face and chest before I got a good look into the thing. When I managed finally to get my head over the edge, the chill was more distinct.

I dropped a rock, waited, heard nothing.

Two more rocks and nothing, then a bigger rock and a long wait and at last a faint plink. Like when you open your mouth and thump the side of your cheek with your finger. I crawled away from that place.

She was lying on the sleeping bag in the sun, as slim and bare as a sword, the light bouncing off her in sweet hard curves, the cream-colored hair in a pony tail, eyes closed. She'd turned the bag over so that she lay on the diamond-quilted back of it and the clear color of her against the tan cloth was beautiful to see.

There were hot coals in the hollow rock and the coffee was bubbling there in the cheap pot. There was some bacon, red and wrinkled, on a folded paper on the rim of the rock, and the bread was there in its oiled wrapper. I finished off the coffee, ate all the cooked bacon and the bread, sitting with my back against the cooking rock and looking at her. I didn't know whether or not to tell her about the shaft. I felt remarkably happy because the shaft was such a big one as well as such a deep one and then, too, I felt happy because of the walloping stretch of space all around me, the feeling of freedom up there in the rocks. You don't know the meaning of freedom until you've been locked up a long time.

I dumped the grounds out of the coffeepot, burned the bread wrapper and the paper she'd used as a blotter for the bacon grease. I smoked and the taste of it was a sweetness like nothing in this world. I gave her a cigarette and she propped up on her elbows to smoke it, kicking her toes lightly against the bag. "Tim, you'll find out anyway, so I might as well tell you."

"Tell me what?"

"I took the hatchet and beat hell out of the glove compartment in the car. I tried to pry it open but it wouldn't come. And I beat hell out of it."

"And what did that get you?"

"It got me a girdle, the one you slit to pieces."

I kept smoking.

"Tim, I was going to get out of here. You're such a queer one. And believe me, I've seen some queer ones, but you're the champ. Your face last night."

The smoke wasn't so good now.

"You look big and healthy." She laughed. "And you don't snore in bed. But you give me the creeps."

The smoke tasted foul.

"You move around like a damned tormented tomcat and your eyes aren't right. You're just about perfect. And you're just about horrible. And last night—you prowled around snuffling the air and messing around in that water down at the creek and reading the paper."

"Is that all?" I was sitting very close to her. I wanted to hit her in the mouth. But more than that I wanted to hear what she had to say.

She'd flipped her cigarette away and now her chin rested on her forearm and her voice was soft and faraway as if she talked to her arm: "I've had the feeling you were going to kill me. And it scared the holy hell out of me until now, scared me even more than the thing I was running from when I first met you. When you left this morning I thought I'd get the money and the gun and make some kind of break for it, maybe get down to Cripple Creek and catch me a ride to the Springs and then a bus. I know you're up to something that's no good, whatever it is it's no good for either of us, and you know I know you're up to it. So I put two and two together and the answer was: *he's going to kill me.* And then I thought how silly it'd be for me to run off and stumble around in these rocks and how you'd catch me and that would be it."

"It's a long way back to the plush apartment on Beekman Place," I said.

Her eyes widened slightly. "I got to thinking of what I've told you, while I was beating on the lid thing of the glove compartment. Then when I got into it and there was only the cigarettes and the folded newspaper I knew it. And all of a sudden I took off my clothes and calmed down nice as you please. Isn't that funny? It always calms me to take off my clothes. Isn't that funny?"

"I'm dying," I said. "I'm convulsed."

"I was calm but I was still scared, until I heard your footsteps coming. In the daylight they make more noise. And when I heard you coming I seemed to get the big picture." She smiled and stretched. "I used to go with a major. He was always talking about the big picture. To him the big picture was his battalion. And I used to know a colonel and he talked about the big picture and to him it was his regiment. And there was a general, a real honest-to-God general who carried a riding whip to bed with him, and the big picture to him was his division. Do I make it clear, Tim? About what is the big picture?"

"You make it clear that your wartime activities were not on the enlisted level."

"Well, the big picture to me is *me.*"

"So that's a surprise?"

"So I got it in focus when I heard you coming and it added up to nothing more than a dead minx in the mountains."

A dead five-hundred-dollar-a-shot minx who once lived at Beekman Place? Who left home with two bags and now has two bags, two very nice ones? Who left home with two violet eyes and now has two violet eyes—which I prefer to think are lavender? Who has the very sniftiest of New York labels in her skirts and blouses?"

"You really did read that paper," she drawled. "I'm proud of you, sweetie. I thought you were faking and that you couldn't read a lick."

"I'm no detective," I said, "but if you try to serve me just one more curve ball I'm going to phone New York and spill my guts all over the district attorney. If I'm wrong about you, and I may be, I lose nothing. If I'm right I get the good homey satisfaction of putting them on your tail, and no pun intended."

Her mouth shook. I put my hand out and touched the pony tail of hair and then I closed my fist around it, gently, not knowing what I was going to do. And somehow the hair came alive in my fist and something moved up from it into my wrist and along my arm and into my chest where I really live. "Virginia, I don't want to kill you." I turned her over off her belly onto her back and kissed her and her arms came up around my neck and she was crying against my mouth. Crying hard and salty. And I was talking, talking more than I had since I was a kid and telling her things I never thought I'd tell anybody. About how Jeepie's face bubbled on top the prison wall in my dreams. And why it bubbled. And how Jeepie kept going over and over the plan of the trailer and how sometimes his face looked like a red well: and the well was never quiet. And I told her why I fooled around at night snuffling the air and messing in the creek, how the simple business of space and moving around was a luxury to me and I'd never get halfway enough of it if I lived to be a hundred years. I told her how it'd been spending thirty-four months in the Japanese prison camp on the Island of Luzon, clamped there in the heat and filth with ten thousand others, and how they buried the weak ones alive, some of them who were too weak to work, too weak even to throw off the dirt and sit up in their graves. I told about getting my honorable discharge button and going home and selling office supplies until I blew my cork and landed in Parchman with Jeepie and Thompson and the others, and how at Parchman I'd decided I was through being locked up and through being poor.

Virginia kept on crying.

You read about the therapeutic value of lying on a psychiatrist's couch and spouting your troubles. Let me tell you this. Substituting, for the couch, a young woman who is crying her heart out, is the way it should be done.

I forgot all about how tough I thought I was. I went back to the days when I was a kid with grass stains on my knees and my dad was a country town dentist who used to get drunk and sob and slobber all over me. Because his debts got bigger and bigger and his practice smaller and smaller all the time. He couldn't sob on my mother because she hated the way he smelled. I told Virginia how he used to put his face against his work table and bawl and when he'd raise his head there would be scraps of gold sticking to his cheek, the kind of gold they use to fill teeth, the kind that comes in sheets and you can cut with a scissors. I told her how once my dad and I got drunk together after I got out of the Army and he melted down my honorable discharge buttom and filled one of my teeth with it and from then on until the day he died we called it my honorable discharge tooth. I didn't blow my lid and go to Parchman until after he died. I yakked and yakked and my idea of pure hell would be to have a movie of all that blubbering played back to me now. Twenty-seven may be too young to die. But it isn't too young to die like a man. And if anybody knew of the night I spent up there in the mountains catterwauling like a sick sheep, I think I'd butt my brains out right now.

We spent three days and nights up in the rocks and then another day and by the fourth night we decided our faces looked much better what with the new suntans and outdoor living. I'd fished the stream and we'd swum a lot in the deep cold water of the pool and eaten bacon and fish and canned creamed corn and beans. The lumps on our faces had gone down a lot and I think the stinging cold water in the pool helped some, too, as well as the whiskyless nights and heavy sunburns.

We drove down into Cripple Creek at eight that fourth night and it was like taking a roller-coaster into the town, riding the clutch most of the way.

The hotel was easy to find. It was pretty much the way Virginia's friend said it was. In the lobby I bought tickets to the melodrama thing, from a sub-villain who was caked with suntan make-up and rouge and who said his name in the melodrama was Dirk Sneathe, and that he wasn't half the beast the main villain was. The sub-villain sat at an old Governor Winthrop desk and he said he always sold tickets until just before the show began down in the Gold Bar. That's what they called the little basement beneath the lobby. The lobby whirled with guests and with flannelly visitors from Colorado Springs. There was a steady cackle of talk of one kind and another about gold mines and various diggings and properties in the area. And after all, that was mainly what I'd come to hear, so I felt good about everything. I wanted to know more about those abandoned shafts, and if they were likely to *remain* abandoned.

Virginia was in fine spirits when we left the lobby and descended the splintery stairs into the Gold Bar room. She was watching the people and holding onto my arm. The bartender wore a phony gay-nineties mustache and a checked vest and he was drunk enough himself to slosh the stuff around generously. Two I. W. Harpers painted the room prettily. I got a kick out of being in a crowd of people who were out to enjoy themselves. There were pictures over the bar of John L. Sullivan and of Gentleman Jim Corbett, both stripped to the waist and wearing the kind of pants you see on tightwire performers and ballet dancers. There were pictures, too, of a number of the old gold mines, and there at the left, almost at the end of the row, was the skinny leaning building I'd found near our camp. It couldn't have been anything else, because at the front edge of the roof some of the boards were fanned up and out like a bat's wing, and the rusted wheel and cable were there, too.

I pointed to it and asked the bartender about it.

He grinned. "That's the old Katie Lewellyn."

I'd heard someone say in the lobby that the Golden Cycle Corporation was reworking the Molly Kathleen and some of the others, that the operators had modern machinery that now made it profitable to process low-grade ore that was worthless before the new machinery was invented. I asked the bartender if anyone planned to go back into the Katie Lewellyn. Virginia looked at me strangely.

"I don't think they'll ever touch her again," the bartender said with thick gaiety, as if he were discussing a woman. "The Katie Lewellyn was never much more than a hole in the ground."

That was fine. Fine. I laughed and turned to Virginia and pulled her against me and she, still watching me in that strange way, pushed me back for an instant, then relaxed into me and giggled. I kissed her and the bartender clapped. When I quit kissing her there was a crowd around us, everybody clapping and smiling, and I guess most of them thought we were newlyweds and that the Colorado air and the bourbon were working on us so hard we couldn't wait. Virginia's wedding ring had a splendid glow to it in the dim light and she was slightly flushed with the excitement. People were introducing themselves to us and the next thing I knew an usher in a checked vest like the bartender's came up to us and handed me two phony mustaches. He showed me how to stick them on. I pasted mine in place and put the other one on Virginia.

CAVALIER



"King size, please."

Almost everybody in the room had on the mustaches and some of them wore papier-maché derbies lettered in white: THE GOLD BAR. The audience sat at tables, not in rows of seats, little drinking tables which allowed them to continue buying drinks all through the show.

When the curtain lifted on the melodrama we were sitting at a table with an elderly giant who had fluffy blue-white hair, and a woman about his age, and I presume, their daughter who was something else again. The daughter wore one of those blouses and she filled it to bursting and under the table she kept pushing her leg against mine whenever we laughed about anything. And we laughed about everything. The daughter had a good mouth and the kind of ragged white teeth that shone when she laughed. I've always liked teeth like that. And there's nothing I can do about it. I simply like them. So I shoved back against her knee. The world was just too damned dandy.

It got so dandy after a time I began drinking plain ice water and I stuck to it for an hour, all through the part of the show where Simon Hasselberry and Dirk Sneathe strapped Little Nell to the railroad tracks.

Virginia kept on with the double bourbons. This worried me because she was laughing kind of wild and at all the wrong places. We were sitting well back from the stage, but at one point she got up and walked to the footlights, threading her way among the tables, and chunked a bag of popcorn at the villain. She forgot to open the popcorn before she threw it and it knocked the villain's hat off on the floor. He blew her a kiss.

We managed somehow to drive back to the camp and the next morning I drank half that damn creek before my mouth tasted right.

Virginia?

She felt wonderful. She split some canned wieners and fried them with the eggs and made some coffee on our rock stove. We were out of bread and she buttered some soda crackers and toasted them in a tin and they tasted pretty good. By noon we were swimming together in the pool. She was wonderful in the water, almost professionally good, and the water was clear because its bottom was solid rock and there was nothing to stir up and cloud it. It must have been about nine feet deep and cold, achingly cold. It felt so fine to my head I'd take a deep breath and go limp and sink down to the bottom and squat there. From below the surface was a sheet of mercury and then I'd see it break roughly as she kicked against it coming down to me. It was like watching her through a sheet of clean green cellophane. She came and curved around me and slid along my back and shoulders. A futuristic kind of love. Love with all the heat taken out of it.

We bundled up in the bag in the shade of the baby cliff in the camp and dozed and kissed until dusk. And then we did some absolute sleeping and when I opened my eyes it was night. A million stars, a quadrillion stars, blinking in the wind.

"Virginia?"

"Mm-mmmm."

"Virginia!"

"What, Tim?"

"I don't know too much about loving, honestly loving, but I think I love you."

"You're drunk, Tim, drunk on sunshine and exercise and having a woman all to yourself."

"No. I feel funny about you."

"Then you're crazy."

"Of course, but that has nothing to do with it. I want to make you happy, so I guess I love you."

"Tim, you'll never make anybody happy." She kissed me very softly. "Not permanently happy, I mean. All your love is where it's easy to get at and easy to lose." She kissed me more firmly, knowingly.

"That's bad?"

She rolled against me and I could smell the baby-smell that was there and yet wasn't there. "It's good. You're a good man, Tim, and there aren't many good men left."

Some time later, quite some time later, I told her about the plan, all about what I meant to do in Denver and why; and how the old Katie Lewellyn fitted into the tail end of the scheme, how it added the final polishing touch to Jeepie's grand strategy.

CHAPTER FIVE

After we left the car in the parking lot in Denver, we started reading the classified and looking for a house.

Virginia seemed glum when we crawled off the bus on Colorado Boulevard near the golf-driving range with the big black and red targets in the ten-hundred block. She brightened later after we found the furnished house, a small thing of mouse-colored brick, in a good but not a fancy neighborhood where everybody was out in their yards watering the lawns with sprinklers and hoses. I was used to the Mississippi and Red rivers and rain all the time and down where I come from it is a battle to keep the grass cut as fast as it grows. I'd seen only a few persons standing out in the yard with a hose and it seemed strange to see a whole neighborhood at it at once, but Virginia said it was like that out West. "The papers are always loaded with stories about reclamation and new dams and things like that and they pray for rain and act downright silly when it comes. They talk all the time about how water is man's best friend and they burn silver iodide day and night."

We were sitting on the brick railing of the front porch and the real estate man was out on the lawn pulling up the metal sign that said the house was for rent. You could see that each neighbor had a different little system of wiggling the hose or regulating the sprinkler and that these adjustments and manipulations were of grave importance to all of them. There was an old man in a yellow undershirt across the street, giving us the once-over-lightly, but not staring at us.

"They're nuts about water out here," Virginia said. "But every time they go out fishing or swimming their hip boots fill up with water or they swallow too much of it and drown. They love it. But there isn't enough of it for them to ever get used to it."

The old man in the yellow undershirt twisted his hose around so he was watering in our direction. He still wasn't quite staring. Virginia smiled at him and nodded. He jerked around and began watering the other way toward his house.

"He's shy for his age," I said.

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CAVALIER published every 6 weeks at Greenwich, Conn., for October 1, 1953.

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GORDON FAWCETT,
Business Manager.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 21st day of September, 1953.

[SEAL] LILLIAN M. KLEIN

(My commission expires April 1, 1958)

I paid the real estate man a month in advance and he said he hoped we liked Milligan Street and that he used to live there himself. He gave the impression I could work my way up to a better street, too, if I stayed on the ball and went to bed early and watered my grass plenty. He gave me his card. This was the second one and I guess he'd forgotten giving me the first one. Real estate men and insurance salesmen generally seem to be loaded with the things, with an unlimited supply of cards, and there's something about the way they hand them to you that makes you take them whether you want them or not.

When he was gone I went inside with Virginia and threw the cards in the fireplace.

She said she wanted to take a bath. After she started the water running I went down to the parking lot and got the Packard.

I tipped the attendant a quarter and he looked at me as if no one ever tipped him, holding the quarter in the palm of his hand and not closing his fingers on it.

"Keep it," I said. "For your own glory."

Virginia and I watched the Denver Post and the Rocky Mountain News for a week without finding the job I wanted, the exact kind of job that would fit into my plan, and in that week we met most of the people in the neighborhood; and just to make it strictly kosher I bought myself a wedding ring, mine of yellow gold, fat and plain and reassuring. The old man in the dirty undershirt across the street came over after about four days and introduced himself and said his name was Damon and that he had a nephew by name of Runyan, and we took him in the kitchen and gave him a drink. He said he knew we were all right when he saw Virginia out in the yard watering the grass, and that anybody who took care of the grass must have a good streak in them. He said his wife had diabetes and the blood wouldn't circulate right in her toes so he did all the house cleaning and cooking and some night we'd have to eat some of his beans, which he cooked with mustard and catsup and just a dash of chili powder. We never did eat the beans, but like I say, we met him and most of the others and it turned out to be a drinking neighborhood—which helped.

Everybody seemed tickled to death in the nasal twangy way Denver people get tickled, that Virginia and I had been married only a month (that was our story) and when Virginia watered the lawn in a pair of faded denim shorts and the cocoa-colored T shirt made of toweling, they came out on their front porches in droves. Next door to Mr. Damon was a red-haired Zulu who sat on a striped glider all day long and read paperbacked novels and scratched herself. She had the most hair of any one person I've ever seen if you counted her arms and legs, too. She was married and had a black-eyed baby that was almost hairless and when she came to see us she brought the baby along. I don't know her name and never did; but I know the way she loved her baby was good to see and her husband, who was on the road most of the time, looked fat and happy.

It was a sane and fairly respectable neighborhood for the most part, except for a pale young man with oily fair hair who lived on the same side of the street we did, four houses down. The Zulu said when he got off work he would pull his clothes off and sit in a Morris chair in the living room and when anybody rang the doorbell he would get up and walk to the door without putting on his pants. We never met him.

Next door, on our right, was a Mrs. Mooney, who liked flowers, and who had a married daughter in Georgia, married to an infantry officer at Fort Benning. On our left were the Massengales, who had a two-year-old granddaughter whose head was slick as an onion, and they talked most of the time about whether the child would grow hair. Virginia said it seemed a shame that the Zulu across the street couldn't divvy up with the bald child, share "all those shockingly active follicles" with the baby.

Across the street next door to Mr. Damon, on his right, was a red brick house. There was a long, lanky girl, I guess about nineteen, who came out of the house in the late afternoons and watered the lawn and sometimes mowed it. I never saw anyone else there at all. She was strong and quick and deeply tanned and she wore shorts. When she pushed the mower you could see the bronzed muscles jump in the backs of her legs. She had the kind of ragged white teeth I like. And she was the only one of the lot Virginia didn't like. Virginia said the lanky girl never smiled or spoke, but she must have smiled some time or other or I wouldn't've seen her teeth. "She's an A-number-one snake," Virginia said.

In Denver you do most of your neighboring in the evening with your garden hose in your hand, and I was right proud of Virginia for thinking to buy a hose. Ours was tan plastic and you could see the water in it and the air bubbles white as snow inside the transparent tube. Looking back on it, I think we were in, the moment the neighbors saw that super-hose. I can still see Virginia out there on the thin green grass, watering, the high-altitude sunlight making silver hyphens of the droplets. The shorts, cuffed and very short, curving against the curves of the legs. The young bride—healthy and conscientious and insatiate.

On Monday of the second week I found the job that fitted into the plan.

The job was important for a number of reasons. Until we laid the chips on the line and pushed the plan into action I wanted to seem as respectable and accounted-for as anyone in the city of Denver. If anyone asked me anything I wanted to be able to say: "I'm Timothy Sunblade and I do thus and such. And I live at so-and-so." If I were picked up on my old record before we got the plan rolling I'd blow my head off. I couldn't stand that. Not now, with most of the ticklish little bugs smoothed out of the plan. There was still the armored car and the buying of the trailer. I had to learn a lot about armored cars and armored car guards. And I had to buy a trailer, long and wide and very tough.

But, about the job:

It was in a big dusty plant on the south side of town, a place where they made bodies for sugar-beet trucks. My job was what they call a power-shear operator, working a wide hydraulic blade that chopped sheet metal the way you cut cheese.

The woman who interviewed me and gave me the application blank was also a nurse. I saw blood on one of her thumbs when she handed me the blank to fill out and I asked her about it. She smiled, saying, "Lad lost four fingers downstairs. Really nice fellow."

The application blank was a long drawn-out thing, loaded with personal questions. They wanted to know if you were using Morris-Myers as a stepping stone or if you intended to make it a career. They wanted to know where you worked last (this I faked), your age, marital status if any, diseases you'd suffered and when. And when I'd filled it out I had to go downtown and see a doctor. He examined me for hernia, piles and syphilis, looked down my throat and appraised my teeth. The job was little more than that of a common laborer. But you'd have thought I was trying to qualify for the Rangers.

I passed the examination with flying colors and the doctor said I should make a hell of a power-shear operator. He said also that my chest and shoulder development was unusual for such a tall man with such long slim legs. I thanked him. On the hernia test I thought

he dragged it out a bit and I got very tired of coughing for him; but I needed the job. And apparently Morris-Myers needed me. When I took the doctor's certificate back to the nurse-secretary she sent me in a room to get my picture taken and they gave me a small square thing with my picture and work number on it. And the name: Timothy Sunblade. I picked that name when I left Parchman, because it is a name that smells of the out of doors.

"You start at seven-thirty in the morning," the woman said. "You need any money for work clothes?"

"No, thanks."

"We can advance it, you know, for overalls or khakis, and gloves and shoes."

"No."

She frowned slightly, scratched her cheek. "You're sure you know what you're getting into."

"You mean about the blade?"

"Yes, the blade. You know it'll take fingers and hands along with the steel."

"I got that impression."

She grinned. "All right. First thing in the morning, before you punch the clock, check out a new tape at the equipment office downstairs. It's to the left of the door as you come into the place. You'll need a tape to measure your cuts."

"My whats?"

"It's a spool tape of spring steel and you hook the metal tip of it on the edge of the sheet and stretch it across to see if you cut the right width and length."

"Oh."

"We've worked Mexicans and Cajuns and college men and idiots on that power shear," she said. "But I don't mind telling you that you don't look like the kind of man for that kind of job."

As Virginia would have said, the woman was getting tiresome. I was impatient to get back to the house on Milligan and tell Virginia about it. Yet something in the nurse's voice kept me there.

"You don't look soft, but you're just too damned pretty," the nurse said.

"Try me."

"Oh, we're trying you—I told you that."

I had about fifteen-hundred dollars in my hip pocket and the rent on the house came to eighty-five a month. Virginia and I had to eat, too. And we didn't know what the trailer would cost. So aside from the business of making me appear respectable and providing me the tools I needed for my get-rich-quick plan, the sixty-dollar-a-week job served more simple needs.

The first five days were the roughest, getting accustomed to breathing the powdered rust that came up off the sheet metal when you slid it off the dolly onto the cutting table. We handled the metal in sheets that sometimes were more than eighteen feet long and three feet wide. The flat dolly was greasy and when a sheet stuck to it as you were sliding it onto the cutting table you had to grab the end of the sheet and whip it up and down so it bellied in the middle. This broke the grip of the grease. While the sheet of steel was shimmying you started sliding it off the dolly.

The second day Spano grabbed a sheet of the metal and started to whip it up and down this way and the edge of the sheet sliced through the palm of his glove and into the flesh.

Spano had been a shear operator for six years and that is a pretty long time for that kind of work, he said. The foreman, a cheerful but sick-looking little fellow named Brannigan, told me that in six months as Spano's assistant I ought to be able to draw pay as a full-fledged operator instead of a helper and then Spano would get the sack. I asked Brannigan why he wanted to get rid of Spano. He said, "The goddamn little Chili's got too much on his mind. He's already lost two fingers here and part of another. And he's always forgetting to pull the tape from under the blade of the shear. Stomps down on the foot-control and the blade chops off the tip of his tape. We keep him around, he's going to cost Morris-Myers some real money."

Brannigan said I was different. "You don't have your head crammed with chili powder and trouble at home. You got your mind on your work. I can see that."

"I think I'm going to like it," I lied.

"Sure you will."

Brannigan said he himself started as a power-shear operator and worked up the ladder to foreman and I could do the same if I proved I had the stuff, and he thought I did.

We left it at that.

I couldn't help thinking of Benson, the cockeyed driller down on the Atchafayala, who said some day I'd work my way up to derrick man. He and Brannigan came out of the same pod. Both had the terrible conceit of little men who through fortune or persistence had landed in positions where there were even little men for them to boss around. I'm sure it never occurred to either of them that they were stupid.

Spano, on the other hand, had a lot of sense and guts but he didn't give a damn. And he had a sense of humor of a sort. The first day I was on the job he slid a strip of twenty-gauge steel under the shear and motioned me to stomp the foot-control, a long bar which under pressure drops the blade. Once you kick the bar and the blade begins to come down there is no stopping it, no brake of any kind.

"You've got two fingers under the blade." I said. I'd almost stomped the control before I looked and it shook me up.

"I'm your boss, damnit, and I said stomp her!" He looked mad.

"Move your fingers."

He shook his head, then dropped his own foot against the control, and there was a *wharrump* and I saw the shear crunch down through the two fingers of the cotton-backed glove and through the sheet of steel beneath. When the shear lifted, the fingers weren't there.

Then he removed the glove and I saw the smoothly healed stumps. He leaned back against the cutting table and roared and finally I began laughing with him, but I saw Brannigan watching us from across the shed and I nudged Spano. "To hell with him," Spano said, and kept on laughing until he'd had enough of it.

I think it was Perkerson, the welder, who first told me Brannigan was sleeping with Spano's wife. Anyway, whoever it was that told me said Brannigan couldn't ever get enough of women and women couldn't get enough of Brannigan; and that it was killing Brannigan, servicing all the ladies and doing his homework, too. He'd been married a long time. And whoever told me about this said that some day Spano was going to kill Brannigan and he hoped it would happen right there in the shop where everybody could see it. Later, I heard more or less the same kind of thing from a half-dozen men in the shop. Wettermark, who worked the bending machine where they bent the steel into nice neat crimps and corners and curves, said Brannigan was always putting Spano on overtime jobs, critical rush work that the front office demanded in a hurry, then sneaking out to Spano's house. Wettermark said in a way he didn't blame Brannigan because Mrs. Spano was one of those women who was going to run around anyway and if she didn't fool with Brannigan or the milkman, she'd certainly find some punk kid in the neighborhood, and that the story was that after her baby was born she had an affair with the Tidy-Didey man who drove the truck that picked up soiled diapers. Wettermark said Spano had prostate trouble and was generally pretty tired, and the tireder Spano got the better it was for Brannigan.

Whether it was the truth or not I felt uneasy whenever Brannigan came to the shear and helped us.

He was a great one for helping you. Especially if you were cutting steel triangles for side braces to be used inside the beds of the beet trucks. He loved to cut the triangles and couldn't resist getting into the act whenever he saw Spano and I had an assignment for two or three hundred of the things. On precision work like this you have to get your fingers jammed under the blade sometimes, set the metal just so, then withdraw the fingers and kick the foot-control.

The shear comes down with a *kerwhang*, like the couplings sound between freight train cars when the engineer throws the train into reverse.

I used to know how many pounds of pressure are behind the shear. But now it's enough to say it'll clip off a rifle barrel without half trying.

And Brannigan, who appeared to love to push his hands beneath the blade, was almost comically proud of those same hands. He never for a minute forgot his gloves, seldom shucked them off even to smoke. And he kept a flesh-colored cream in his locker in the washroom and when he'd cleaned up he made a little rite of rubbing the stuff into the skin of his hands.

The shop, except for the noise and the rust in the air, was a lot like a barracks. Too many men under one roof.

But every week I was drawing my check, on the fancy beige watermarked paper bearing the company legend: MORRIS-MYERS: Just One Big Happy Family.

And Virginia and I were getting dug into the neighborhood out on Milligan, going to the Hill Store together for groceries, watering and watering the lawn in the dusk, each night making the traditional Denver mudpie out front of the mousey brick bungalow. Respectability all over the place. We even bought a few sticks of folding porch furniture, the kind that pinches you, so we could sit out front in the cool and smash mosquitoes and swap small talk with the Massengales and with old man Damon across the street.

The folks in the neighborhood saw me leave early in the morning and come home at five. And those who cared to look saw Virginia kissing me off at the door, Virginia in a flowered cotton dress, Virginia in her shorts, Virginia in a black-and-turquoise housecoat. Virginia in a bored rage: "Damn you, Tim, I'm not taking much more of this." And: "Plan or no plan, I'm not going to squat here in this thus and such and scrape the mildew off me." And: "When for God's sake do we do what we *came* for?" And sometimes it was simply a string of filth, whispered in those wonderfully cultured tones, the vowels of the four-letter words trimmed and softened expensively. Whispered, always whispered smilingly at the door.

I believe I'd known it would be this way. But I was depending on her selfishness, her greed, and the threat of the phone call to the district attorney in New York. One night when she was about six highballs off her guard she had flatly admitted the New York mess and her part in it. I figured these things would be bigger than the impatience.

And sometimes she was wonderful.

She cheered up after I bought the trailer.

We'd been there a little less than six weeks before I found what we needed, a homely dented thing, wide in the beam and square as a box in the rear.

The used-trailer salesman said some guy

had built it with his own hands, of cypress and scrap iron, and that barring a wreck or fire it would last forever.

I hitched the Packard to it and, Virginia with me, towed it out to Morris-Myers and parked it in a field north of the shop. Virginia stayed in the car and I went in the plant and got Brannigan and brought him out to the trailer and told him what I needed: how I wanted the rear wall cut out and braced and strengthened with steel I-beams, the beams covered then with sheet iron. Then the whole thing replaced, with a strong hinging system that would allow us to drop it down and use it as a ramp when we wished to take furniture into the trailer.

"You want a kind of drawbridge," Brannigan said, licking his lips and looking straight at Virginia.

"Yes."

Virginia smiled. "You see, Mr. Brannigan, we want to be able to move a huge custom-built divan into it. The door's much too small for that."

"Call me Mike," Brannigan said, giving it the classic inflection.

"Tim and I both love monstrous furniture," Virginia said. She dropped her eyes. "And we want a whale of a bed in the trailer."

I explained to him, too, that since Virginia and I hoped to vacation in Arizona when I became eligible for vacation next year, we thought it would be fine to have a rear wall that simply folded down and opened the entire end of the trailer to whatever breezes there were. "I could cut some of the stuff on the shear. And Wettermark would bend the beams for me from that outsize stock in the yard. Anyway, it's pretty tricky, the whole thing, and I wanted to see what you thought about it."

Brannigan glanced at Virginia. He loved to be asked what he thought about it. Especially if it was sheet metal and was tricky. "Oh, we can swing it, Tim, a dab here and a dab there. On our own time of course."

Virginia bit her lip worriedly. "Mr. Brannigan, will it cost us too awfully much, for the materials?"

"Call me Mike," Brannigan said. When he latched onto a good fresh line he didn't like to turn it loose, and you could tell this had proved a good one for Brannigan. He said it as if it was brand new, as if it sizzled against his teeth. And maybe it did.

Virginia smoothed her hips. "Mike," she said.

"The ramp," Brannigan said, "won't cost you a red cent."

This was on a Friday. I had Fridays and Sundays off. The Sundays were no good. On my next Friday I put on my best suit, a very conservative black knit tie, and headed downtown early, leaving Virginia asleep. I reached the Trimble National Bank on Hardy Street around nine o'clock and I stood there in the sunshine, leaning against the red marble wall near the entrance, smoking and sorting out my thoughts and waiting, the money for the deposit in my pocket folded hard against my hip so I could feel it when I pressed against the wall. The trailer had cost me only seven hundred and that left me with another seven C's, all that remained of what I'd had when I left Krotz Springs. I planned to visit the bank regularly. To make modest but periodic deposits in a savings account. To get me a savings pass book. Then if anyone asked me why I found it so nice out front of the Trimble National I'd fish out my Morris-Myers card with my work number and picture on it. And I'd come up with the savings pass book and I'd be indignant as hell. After all, when a man gets down to the bank early he's got to wait for it to open. And the best place to wait is at the door. And if it's the same door the armored car guards use when they make their morning call with the money they collected from depositors after banking hours the preceding day, well, it's no fault of mine, is it?

And you show me the man who's never goggled at an armored car and I'll show you a freak of nature.

CHAPTER SIX

The armored car boys arrived at a quarter of ten. The number of their car was "12," painted in five-inch numerals, in white, in a metal plate on the side of the car. That was important to me on this my first day as a student of armored cars. Jeepie had said: "It doesn't do any good to study one car and then another and another. You've got to watch one of them over and over. Get to know the driver and the custodian, the punk who sits in back with the money. Get to know everything about them, figure their weaknesses and habits. Don't forget that any time there's a successful bank robbery or armored car job, it's because of some human failure. Any time a thing depends on manpower someone's going to flub the dub, and all you have to do is keep your eyes peeled and wait. The waiting is the hardest part. And the biggest. But it pays. You wait long enough and either the driver or the custodian is going to forget the rules laid down by the company for taking care of that money. The supervisor can't be everywhere at once. He has too many cars under his command. And some time, some place, if you stick with the same little steel turtle, either the driver or the custodian is going to take what he thinks is a short cut in procedure. Then in time, if the boss doesn't catch him, he's going to take a short cut on a short cut. That's when he rips his pants. That's when you make your move. You've rehearsed it in your head a thousand times by then. For a quarter-million dollars you can do a lot of rehearsing. Your target's perfect. What could be more perfect than an armored car? It's stinking with money and it's got wheels on it. The getaway and the haul are all wrapped up in one package. If you play it cool."

The driver was a young fellow, short and heavy in the shoulders. He had a football walk and big hands for his size and you got the idea he could use the gun on his hip.

He came out of the cab and slammed the door behind him, strutted back to the rear of the car, and the custodian opened the door from inside and shoved out two canvas sacks. The sacks were heavy, with brass grommets and a draw-cord around the tops of them. The driver, one sack hanging from each hand, strutted to the swinging glass doors and pushed inside with his shoulder. I saw someone in there unlock the second set of doors and he went on in. All this time the custodian of the armored car peeked out through a slit on the side of the car, keeping the driver covered. That was all right, too. The plan included disposal of old Peeping Tom.

I couldn't see him very well. And I didn't want him to get too careful a look at me either now or in the days to come. So I went inside and opened the savings account, and by the time I was finished giving Trimble National my five bucks, Car No. 12 was gone.

I picked it up fifteen minutes after I came out of the bank. It was three blocks east, on Morgan, collecting deposits in an office building. I spent the rest of my day tailing it, making mental notes of the various stops along the route. They have routes just like laundry trucks. Making certain stops at certain places as near on schedule as possible. They collect wads of soiled money from doctors, dentists, shoestores, and every kind of little operator, as well as the big department stores and movies and chain groceries. Each depositor makes out a little slip with his bundle of dirty money and checks, listing say twenty tens, thirty fives, and so on, instead of four T shirts and five pairs of drawers and six handkerchiefs. And whenever the depositor wishes he can come down to the bank and get fresh sharp-edged money for the other, as long as he brings along his receipt from the armored car man.

I didn't want clean money.

For me, the dirtier the better. I wanted it in medium-sized bills and good and limp and unidentifiable. Jeepie had always talked about knocking off the armored car guards as they came to the bank with a crisp load of fresh money from Federal reserve, money so clean it cricked and crackled in the sack. The trouble with that part of his figuring, I thought, was that Federal reserve shipments are listed serially. Every serial number on every spick-and-span bill. Come time to spend it and you're in a sweat. Once I had the money I wanted to relax and enjoy it.

In a town the size of Denver a Federal reserve shipment of $400,000 to $600,000 is not unreasonable to expect. But on the other hand, collections in cash from depositors might reach $150,000 or more in a single day, and that's a lot of money for a fellow who worked his way through school ghost-writing themes and sweeping out dormitories and serving tables in the fraternity houses for the kids in the three-dollar socks and the Harris tweed jackets. I remember the day one of the boys let me smell his jacket after I'd said I liked it. He said Harris tweed had a special smell and that I ought to know that smell in case I ever got around to Harris tweed. You could tell he didn't think I'd get around to it, but that, after all, democracy produced some strange kittens, and in any event a little knowledge of the better things couldn't do me any harm. I'd come a long way since school days. Now instead of smelling Harris tweed I was sniffing around armored cars.

It was after six when the armored car finished its rounds.

The last stop was the one that interested me most. It was near the State Capitol and the driver went into a three-storied building and was gone almost twenty minutes making his collection and signing, I guess, a lot of papers. Maybe there was some counting to do, too. He didn't hang around on the first floor, but walked straight to the ancient birdcage elevator and was gone. That part was fine, too.

I'd parked the Packard directly across the street. When the driver was gone I saw the rear door of the armored car open just a crack. And an old fellow, dressed in powder-blue serge like the driver and wearing the snug leather-visored cap, pushed it open a little wider and leaned out. He dropped what looked to be a glob of glass onto the street, then popped back inside his steel nest and clanged the door shut.

When they'd gone I skipped across the street and picked up the thing he'd dropped. It was a neatly squared chewing gum package, the cellophane still shining on it, almost intact. I straightened it out and inside were the five empty wrappers of the sticks, each complete, the pink inner paper folded and returned to its outer slot. Old Peeping Tom was fastidious.

Five blocks down the street I spotted them and cruised along behind them, keeping three or four cars between us, until I saw them turn into their barn.

When I got home Virginia was drunk as a lord.

What was worse, she was out on the front lawn watering the trees. That's right, the trees. She stood in the middle of the yard, wobbling around on those lovely legs, and squirting water up into the leaves of the three old elm trees.

I rolled up the windows of the Packard.

The water was coming down on the roof of it from the leaves. I got out fast and moved around the back of the car to her. Out of the side of my eye I saw Damon across the street and he had his own hose going over there. The Massengales were on their front porch, clucking softly the way old people do at dusk. Diagonally across the street the tall girl with the sunburned brown hair was doing something with a lawn mower. I knew all of them were watching Virginia and me.

Virginia said, "The leaves, nobody ever thinks of the poor damned leaves."

"Baby, don't you think you've soaked them enough?" Now the water was frothing down the trunks of the elms, foaming on the rough bark.

"Don't 'baby' me, you sheer-power operator."

"Power-shear, dear."

She wheeled and turned the hose against the front of my best suit, then against my chest, so that the conservative black knit tie leaped sideways. I heard old man Damon begin crowing across the street and when I looked up he clipped it off and took a new grip on his hose, turning his back to me.

"Virginia."

She played the hose over the legs of my pants. "Just stand real still and soak it in and grow and grow and grow," she said. "Grow, damn you. For your own glory."

The Massengales were silent behind the thin screen of the shrubs between our houses. The tall girl had forgotten her lawn mower and was staring. I noticed for the first time that the Zulu, to the left of Mr. Damon's place, was in the striped glider on her front porch, her head hidden behind a paperbacked book. With everybody looking and listening I did the only thing I could do. I took the hose from her, turned it off, and went on in the house and changed clothes. I could still see Old Man Damon grinning, the long custard-colored teeth matching the undershirt.

When she came in I was in the living room reading the morning copy of the Rocky Mountain News. She took it out of my hands and threw it in the fireplace, and said, "Well, let's brush our teeth and go to bed. Or maybe we could bathe. I bought some red soap. It should be exciting, Tim, old boy."

"Cut it out."

"We can lie in bed and look out the back window." She plumped down on the couch. The decorative fringe of twisted strings on the bottom edge of the couch jiggled. I remember those twisted strings. They were chartreuse. In every Denver furniture-store window there were couches with these strings hanging from them. And I've always wondered since if they were peculiar to the town or the times.

"Virginia," I said, "I don't like the waiting any more than you like it."

She wasn't listening. She began humming our tender, haunting honeymoon song: "If You've Got the Money, Honey, I've Got the Time." More than ever before she sounded as if she meant it, and even though I'd drilled her on the plan from start to finish I had the feeling now that maybe Virginia didn't want to wait, that maybe the heat in New York had cooled out enough to allow her back in the luscious old circuit there. But now I couldn't give her any choice. She had to stick. She was in too deep with me.

She went into the kitchen and mixed a strong drink. It was almost red with bourbon. She brought it back to the couch and sat down and there was the business of the fringes jiggling all over again. Then after a time she began talking: "Tim, don't ever be a gentleman again. Like you were out in the yard when I turned the hose on you. It made me want to puke to see you standing there dripping and grinning at me as if I'd done you a favor. For God's sake don't turn into a gentleman on me."

"Don't worry about it," I said. "And, honey, aren't you leaning a little heavy on the sauce? I thought you were the big contrast kid. Once you told me drinking was like loving, you had to do without it a while before it meant anything."

She giggled. "Did I really say that?"

"You really said that."

She set her drink on the floor and came off the couch, all in one boneless long movement, and then she was kissing me and I thought she was going to jerk every stitch of hair out of my head. I picked her up and carried her through the dining room and then through the dark hall that led to the back bedroom, the toes of her sandals rustling against the wallpaper in the hall.



"Darling! Just what I always wanted!"

CHAPTER SEVEN

Brannigan gave Spano and me a worksheet that called for six hundred of the iron triangles. That's the way the morning began, very calmly, with the worksheet clipped up high on the machine where we could study it and keep track of the count. As I remember it Brannigan wanted two hundred triangles cut to one specification and the rest cut to another, because although all of them would be welded into a truck body as braces, some had to be stronger than others. And four of them were to be used in the rear wall of my own trailer, Brannigan said, winking. "You've been a good boy, Tim. It's the least I can do for you to do the job right. That thing's going to be strong as a vault door."

He'd taken over the project of the trailer wall as I'd hoped he would and, thorough workman that he was, had become so interested in it he wouldn't let anyone else touch it. The four braces in the corners were the final pieces. And the drawbridge wall fitted so neatly in the tail end of the trailer you couldn't tell it was hinged along the bottom edge.

Anyway Spano and I started cutting out the triangles on the power shear, first cutting squares, then cutting diagonally across each square so that it made two triangles. Each time we did this one triangle fell behind the machine, on the far side of the blade. As Spano's helper it was my job to go around back now and then and stack them evenly on a low wooden dolly. It was close to lunch time when I heard Brannigan talking with Spano in front of the machine. Brannigan must have put his tape to some of the finished pieces up there. "I tell you they're a sixty-second off at the base."

I heard Spano's tape tinkle against a piece of metal. "The hell they are."

Then I heard the steel tape whir as he pushed it back in its spool, and he said to Brannigan, "If you can cut them any closer to specifications you're welcome to it."

They were keeping their voices in pitch with the shop machinery, down low, and sounded friendlier than usual and I didn't pay much attention to it. Brannigan grunted his official foreman-takes-over-from-laborer grunt, and there was the ringing slam of one of the iron squares hitting the work table in front of the blade. I was down on my knees where I could look almost directly up at the cutting edge and I saw the sheet metal slide under the blade and bump against the gauge. Then the sheet was withdrawn and I saw two of Brannigan's gloved fingers under the blade. Just an instant. He was the only one of us who wore gloves with green sueded palms. It was suffocating behind and under the machine. "Your gauge setting's sloppy," Brannigan said to Spano. And Spano said, "I told you to help yourself."

I went back to the stacking job, careful to avoid the raw steel burrs along the edges of the triangles. They'll lance through leather like a scalpel.

Brannigan came around back, cursing under his breath. Without looking right or left he grabbed the handle of the wheel on the gauge, slipped the locking pin clear, and gave it a vicious spin. If it was off, it couldn't have been off that far, but this seemed to make Brannigan feel better. His face relaxed and he took hold of the handle more gently and turned it slowly until he got it where he wanted it. "Five and five sixty-seconds," he sang out.

Spano yawned. You could hear it. "That's where I had it."

Brannigan moved up front again. "Look here. I've had a bellyful of your mouth."

"And?" Spano said.

"Keep it shut."

"Some day," Spano said softly, "they're going to hitch a battleship onto the island of Ireland and they're going to drag it out in the middle of the ocean and sink it. And then there won't be so much noise in the world."

"I warned you."

"Damn you," Spano said. "Damn you and

all the little milky-legged bed-crawling cockroaches like you."

"We'll go to the office when I finish this," Brannigan said coldly. There was the clanking of the sheet metal against the table again as he slid the square across the table, under the blade, and against the gauge-stop behind the blade. The gauge-stop saves work when you're cutting a number of pieces all alike. If it's set right you simply push them through until they bump it, and make your cut there. I crawled out a little more in the clear. When the blade descends there is an iron bar that pushes down behind the machine. It is parallel to the floor and won't hurt you except to bump your head, since it moves only four or five inches, just like the blade. That unbelievable thrusting cut involves a movement of less than a half-foot.

The sweat and rust powder ran down my forehead into my eyes and the gloves were too dirty for me to wipe it off. I wiped my eye on my shoulder and looked up just as the blade sliced into the square of metal Brannigan had pushed through.

I watched it fall against the boards of the dolly, a clean bluish triangle with clean silver edges.

I started to pick it up and place it on the stack with the others and it was then I saw the three glove fingers lying on the new-cut metal. They were made of yellow cotton with red stripes, and of cheap green suedey leather. I don't remember whether Brannigan began screaming the instant the cut was made, but I remember the screaming getting louder and louder as I came around front and that there were three jets of blood coming out of what was left of his right hand. He was bent over, the hand down between his knees, squirting against the greasy floor. Spano leaned back against the work table, his tailbone on the edge of it, smoking. He was watching Brannigan with the faint frown of someone who's just heard a corny joke.

And that's how I became what Brannigan called a full-fledged power-shear operator.

They never were able to prove that Spano deliberately stepped on the foot-control while Brannigan's fingers were beneath the blade. Spano said he stumbled and put his foot down in the wrong place, and after all, that's happened, too.

Spano was fired—for carelessness.

Perkerson welded the corner braces into the wall of the trailer for me, during Brannigan's convalescence, and that finished the wall except for some rope and pulley work I was able to handle myself, working inside the trailer after hours so I didn't attract much attention. The wall had five metal locking tongues along its top rim that clicked into slots in the edge of the roof when you pushed the wall against it. I think Brannigan was out eight weeks. I quit a week after he came back, telling him that seeing a friend lose his fingers had been too much for me, and that it got worse and worse the more I thought of it.

"You shouldn't take it so hard, Tim," he said. But he sounded pleased. This sallow little Romeo with the sick-cheerful face had done me a favor, and I believe I really did hate to leave. He told me if I ever wanted a job there was one waiting for me at Morris-Myers and that if I was leaving town he wanted to get out and see me and Virginia before we left. I told him fine and that we'd cook up something good and Virginia loved to cook for company and we'd give him a ring sometime. And I thanked him for the work on the trailer and told him to be careful of his stumps and not to get them infected.

I had to check out with the same nurse-secretary who signed me in. She fussed around with some kind of card. "You stayed longer than I thought you would."

I told her about Brannigan, loading it with buddyhood and man's love for man, and the tears came to her eyes.

She asked for the Morris-Myers thing with my picture and work-number on it and when I told her I lost it she said that was all right but the company would have to deduct $1.75 from my final check. That I still haven't figured. But they did deduct it. And I turned in my spool tape and cleaned out my locker downstairs, giving my shoes and gloves and khakis to Perkerson.

On my way home I stopped downtown to see the real estate agent who rented us the place on Milligan. I paid him another month in advance and said my wife and I would likely be moving before the month was up, that she wanted to go down South to some small town and be near her people. He handed me another of his engraved business cards and said it had been a pleasure doing business with us. "But I know how women are—the good ones. Sentimental as the day is long, never like to get too far away from Mamma."

As I've said, I spent all my Fridays tailing armored car number 12, and now I knew a lot about it. But I figured another four weeks, free to spend every day watching, was necessary before we tackled it. That would set the stage for the first week in September. There's no better month on the calendar. For spending money, or for anything.

It was the middle of the afternoon when I got home and I sat in the car a while, looking at the little brick bungalow and thinking how it was the only home of my own I'd ever had. The grass was wet and green. Then I went inside. And guess what—no Virginia.

There are not too many people in Denver, but it covers a lot of miles and when you are looking for one particular person it is amazing how many folks you find in the bars and nightspots, folks who are not the person you're looking for, and who haven't seen or heard of her or anything like her. And who aren't interested in seeing her. In my mind's eye I could see her propped elegantly on some bar stool getting elegantly drunk, murmuring to some interested stranger about how she was keeping house with this nut who took turns being Jack Dempsey and Lord Fauntleroy and who thought he'd doped a sure-fire thing for owning his very own private armored car. Full of money. When she drank she didn't care whether secrets kept or not. Or if it was pouring down rain or Sunday. I wanted to kill her. And I think I might have if things had worked out differently.

By midnight I'd combed more restaurants and bars than Duncan Hines covers in a week. And no Virginia.

When I was finished with the chrome and leather places I went down on Larimer, Denver's skid-row, and I hit the little juke joints one by one. Some of the records were so old in these places they were still playing "Bali Hai." All of them smelled of sour beer and worse. Finally I went in a place called the House of Manchu, a combination bar and restaurant where people were eating stringy-looking dishes in booths along the wall and all the help were Filipinos who looked almost black in their white jackets under the blue light. She was sitting at the bar, next to a fat Filipino in a white sharkskin suit. He was running his hand up and down her back as they talked. She wore a light yellow corduroy dress and it was cut down to the small of her back. So there was plenty of space for him to cover. When he tired of one spot he moved on to another, his hand busy as tarantula in a fly cage. I can't describe the way it made me feel. But I'd never seen anyone else touch her and you can say what you want, but the things you think, and the things you actually see, are altogether different.

I remember grabbing his wrist with my right hand and turning him around to me and how easy the stool revolved with him. He slid off it to his feet, smiling as if he expected me to hook my arm around his waist and swing into a waltz with him. I hit him in the mouth with my left hand. He sat down, his rump wedged between the brass rail and the bar, shaking his head.

"We can't have that in here," the bartender said.

I jerked Virginia off the stool and started out of the room, walking along the length of the bar toward the door with her. She was snickering. Just before we reached the door a tall heavy man with a scarred chin hanging over a very white collar pushed away from the bar and stood spraddle-legged, facing me and blocking the door. "Felix is my friend," he said. I guess Felix was the Filipino with the tarantula touch.

"Fine," I said, "get out of the way."

He said no, he was going to call the police, and nobody was going to knock Felix around and get away with it. I kicked him where it would do the most good.

We caught a cab down the block and I gave the cabbie our Milligan Street address. The thing in the bar had cooled all the steam out of me. Action does that. It always has, for me. So I had nothing left for Virginia when she kept on laughing in the cab and I'm damned if I didn't laugh with her. I tried not to. But I did anyway.

We were almost home when she said to the cabbie, "Driver, we don't want to go home—run us out to Hazleton, in the four-hundred block, Mamie's Unique Massage Parlor." The cabbie shrugged and made a couple of left turns and we were headed back for town.

I couldn't figure what a massage parlor was doing open this time of night. "Who wants a massage?"

"I'm going to show you a place I used to work."

"Here, you worked here?"

She snuggled against me. "Only a short time."

"I wondered how you knew about the hose and the grass and all."

"That's how."

"But," I said, "I know you about as well as you can know a woman who just popped up out of the carpeting of a hotel."

We stopped in front of a white stucco Spanishy place, one of those narrow high-low apartment buildings, with an orange light in the upstairs windows. I paid the driver, and he said, "Happy massage," and was gone.

We climbed a shallow flight of steps to a landing and a door and Virginia buzzed three times, then three times again. Three more buzzes, then a fast metallic clucking, and Virginia pushed the door inward and we were climbing some more stairs, these carpeted in red and white checks, each check as big as a sandwich and almost as thick. We came out in a parlor. It was done in very good taste except for the orange light, but this seemed a night for odd lights. Pretty soon a matronly looking brunette in a brocaded man's dressing gown came skating out of a door and she and Virginia were hugging and kissing. It was good old *Mamie*. And Virginia I'll be *damned*. And isn't this a *hell* of a note. And Lord how I've wanted to *see* you. And when they were finished with the italics Mamie was shaking hands with me and shaking up some drinks we did not need.

When we were seated and most of the fizz had died out of the reunion, Mamie rattled her ice, and said with a slow shake of her fresh curls, "Jennie, honey, business is on the bum. It's got to where these college girls

and debutantes and even the little high-school punkettes are running us right out of business."

Virginia was humming between sips of the drink, her eyes laughing, yet sympathetic.

"Speaking of debutantes," Mamie said to me, "Jennie was the only honest to God debutante I ever knew good. The only certified one—"

"Shut up, Mamie," Virginia said. Then: "I'm sorry, darling, but do shut up about that."

Mamie was unoffended. "Use to be that a professional woman had it made, and you can ask any man and he will tell you his self that a few years ago you didn't find a girl behind every bush, in every park and on all the golf courses, too."

Now Mamie was almost crying. I asked her why it was she listed her place as a massage parlor and she brightened and said it was for two reasons: one, that the kind of people who like massage parlors often like the other also, and then again, it was a good pitch, in case anybody came snooping around wanting to report her to the law. She took us in another room and flipped on a hard white overhead light. There were two painted iron tables covered with starched linen.

"Somebody comes in and we don't like the way he acts, we lay him out on one of the tables and massage his back. O.K. So we're a real massage parlor."

She showed us three other rooms, bedrooms with mirrored ceilings. "It's only the furnishings that keep me in business. You got to admit this is better than a sand trap on a golf course."

Virginia clapped her hands and howled.

It was almost daylight when we left there. On the ride home Virginia snuggled up against me and sighed, "You know, Tim, I feel so much better now."

You're probably wondering how I could put up with her. Well, let me really give you something to wonder about. I loved her. Not like up in the rocks outside Cripple Creek when I first told her I did. But with all my heart now, as well as the other way. I hadn't known it or even suspected it until I saw that hand on her back in the House of Manchu.

I kept tailing Car No. 12 until I knew every bolt and rivet in it, every slit and slot and gun port, every stop on its route and average length of delay at each. I knew the driver well enough to say hello to him and to have him say hello back to me. I knew that every day, at the last stop before the three-story building on Essex near the State Capitol, old Peeping Tom cracked-cracked the back door of the armored car and dropped out the chewing gum wrapper. Just so. Always the same, the door cracking open a little, then him leaning his shoulder into it and withdrawing. Opening the door when he was alone inside there must have been against regulations, but like Jeepie said, any time a thing depends on man power someone is going to flub the dub. The beautiful thing was that Peeping Tom, in there with the green money, lived his life like a clock. He would no more think of dropping that wrapper on some other street or in front of some other building than he would throw packets of twenties out the gun port. I still hadn't got a good look at him or heard his real name. I did know the driver called him Baldy and that he never answered the driver one way or the other and there was no love lost between them.

The custodian is in charge of the car and, I learned, is usually older and with more company seniority than the driver.

There was no doubt that if I was going to be able to take them it would be at the last stop on their route, with the driver upstairs for such a long time. That left only Peeping Tom, the custodian, to handle. He had to be put away very quietly, no flurry at all, and the way an armored car is built would help me there. Once I was inside I thought of using a sap on him, but it was no good, because as long as he was alive I had potential trouble of the worst kind. If he revived after I'd climbed into the driver's seat of Car No. 12, he could open a square panel directly behind the driver's position and get hold of me. Or, if he had a spare gun hidden in the sacks, he might blow me to pieces. The blackjack was out. I had to kill him. And keep him in the back of Car No. 12 until I was rid of it. If I dumped him on the street I wouldn't get past the first stop light.

You can see it for yourself. Alive he was nothing but trouble.

There are several ways to kill quietly and a gun is not one of them. They talk about silencers on guns, but believe me, there is no such thing as a silencer for a .357 Magnum, and even on small-bore weapons such as the pearl-handled .25 automatic I'd given Virginia the night I was sure I loved her, you can't depend on a silencer to work. When the baffles become worn, or if the connection is faulty, you can hear a .25 good and clear. Inside that steel box it might sound like a cannon. The gun, my own because I trusted it, would be used to get me inside the box and once I was in there the gun would be no more helpful than a bathing suit. I thought of using a steel noose to kill him. It's noiseless, but extremely nasty, nastier than a knife. I found in the Pacific when we were on reconnaissance patrol that sometimes a noose runs into all kinds of elbows and wrists when you're trying to get it over the head. In the excitement you may think you have it into the throat and give it a jerk while it's still around the head. And whoever's inside the noose will bawl out fit to wake the dead. There was no other way but the knife and just thinking of it made me sick. It must be a tough knife with a narrow blade and razored down to a shaving edge.

I mentioned the panel between the driver's seat and the back of the car and how you could slide it open. It was about five inches square. My arms were long enough, I knew, to allow me to reach through from the money compartment and flip the inside latch to the door of the driver's cab. So that when I came out and walked around front I could then climb in under the wheel and get rolling. I calculated that from the time the custodian dropped the chewing gum wrapper to the time I was rolling would be less than thirty seconds, leaving me at least fourteen minutes before the driver came down out of the building and began yelling his lungs loose. If the driver became confused and wasted a minute or so absorbing the shock of the disappearance of the car, that was even better, and it might go that way. You come down out of the same building for months and months, perhaps years, and see the same car waiting. And then one day you come down and it isn't there and it will take you a little time to add and subtract. Even if all you plan to do is scream.

Of course the driver would carry his ignition key to Car No. 12 up into the building with him.

But bridging the ignition with a piece of wire or a coin is a kid's trick and you probably know how to do it yourself. There are two posts or little bolt-looking things directly behind the keyhole on the dash. If you're using wire you make a wrap around both posts and kick the starter and that's it.

As for locating the trailer, the one Brannigan tailored for us, that proved simple. I'd thought of trying to find a quiet alley, which was silly. There are no quiet alleys in Denver, because the garbage men and delivery trucks make speedways of them and the kids somehow manage to play ball in them, fight and race and neck in them. A Denver alley is a fine place to get lost in a crowd. I thought, after discarding the alleys, of some place out on the edge of town, of posting Virginia and the Packard and trailer 'way out where no one would be likely to think about why she was parked so long. We raked the suburbs and new subdivisions where they were building, but none of it panned out foolproof. And if we had found anything, the distance from town would have been too great, too time-consuming.

Then one afternoon when we were both fed up with cruising and looking, we rolled by this mansion on Gilmore, not more than a dozen blocks from downtown, screened by huge blue spruces and some kind of feathery bushes. "Look," Virginia said, "some of the windows are broken." I was too disgusted to care. I glanced up and caught a glimpse of ragged glass through the screen of the trees and bushes, just plain broken glass in points. It meant nothing to me.

"Wait a minute," She touched my arm. "A *lot* of those windows are broken."

I told her I didn't have my putty-knife with me, but that tomorrow we'd come back and I'd patch all the windows for the people inside the mansion.

"Tim, don't you know that anyone with money enough to own a house like that wouldn't live in it with the glass out the windows?" She was talking fast, pinching my arm now. "There aren't any people inside, Tim. It's what we've been looking for from the start."

I slammed on the brakes. A boy in a red Pontiac almost crashed us from the rear and when he pulled around us he called me some things. I backed up a hundred feet and there was a driveway of crushed granite and I pulled into it and followed its rising curve over an acre of unkept lawn. Sure enough, most of the windows were missing. The house was made of slabs of native stone, some of them the size of the Packard, and it had a wide stone veranda around it and a chimney that went up into the trees. The driveway threaded a massive porte-cochere on the right side of the mansion and we pulled into the shade and smoked and talked a long time. Virginia kept saying, "This makes it perfect. Oh, dear God, sweetie, but it's *perfect*." And it was. Because the driveway didn't double back and come out on the same street where you entered. It kept on beyond the porte-cochere, in a long scalloped swing to the right, and came out between stained concrete pillars on another street. We made the trip from entrance to exit, several times, then drove out to the field near Morris-Myers and hitched onto the trailer and brought it back with us. Virginia was afraid we couldn't angle it between the posts, but I knew we could.

I left her and the trailer and the Packard under the porte-cochere and walked down a few blocks to a filling-station, my heart beating against my ribs faster and faster the closer I got to the telephone. I had a hell of a time with the directory, I was so excited, and I remember tearing one of the pages and the way the filling-station attendant stared at me. Then the real estate agent's voice, the voice of the man who liked to give away calling cards: "Three-nineteen Duchesne? Just a minute, sir, I can check it for you." He must have been flipping through some kind of book. "No, sir, it isn't even listed. That's the old Goyer place and I wanted to make certain Buddy Goyer hadn't had a change of heart and rented it, or sold it. Old man died not too long ago. Son won't live in it and won't rent it or sell. I guess he just likes to watch it rot."

"How often does he watch it?"

My real estate man laughed his standard real estate laugh. "Goyer, Jr., doesn't even live here any more."

I wanted to yowl for joy.

Then the real estate man assumed what he must have considered a tone of good natured banter: "I thought you and the Missus were leaving us. Going South. And now you're in the market for six bathrooms and a pool."

I chuckled. That was all he wanted. Only a chuckle, and after all there was nothing wrong with him except the printer turned out those little business cards faster than he could give them away to his clients. "Goodbye, and thanks," I said. When I hung up he was chuckling. Because I had chuckled. If I had cried he'd have cried. He was wonderful for his job.

An hour later we were on our way to Cripple Creek, Packard, trailer, and all, for rehearsal.

We made fairly good time considering the drag and the fact I knew next to nothing about pulling a trailer. We wore the long-billed silly-looking caps of straw Virginia had bought for us so we'd look like tourists. She said if we were going to look like tourists we might as well get accustomed to looking silly, because that was the biggest part of it, a kind of over-all silliness. I thought that was pretty smart.

The place where we'd turned off into the rocks the first time we made camp was easy to find because of the way the road was gouged out wide in a kind of half-circle. We pulled the trailer up to our old campsite to get it off the road. And to give us time to look around. There had to be some kind of road or path to the abandoned shaft of the Katie Lewellyn mine. Virginia wore rope-soled espadrilles of black canvas and I had on some old tennis shoes that were equally good for climbing the rocks. But near the pool where we'd swum and fished before, she slipped and skinned her shin and she sat down and swore a string of words, some of which I never heard before or since.

But when she was through swearing she was through with all of it and went on with me as if nothing had happened. "Mountain climbing is fine for reducing," she said. "You don't have to diet or sweat or anything so juvenile. You find yourself a sharp rock and scrape off five pounds at one lick."

We climbed the slanting rock beyond the pool where once I'd dried out my socks and shoes, and from where I first saw the outbuilding of the Katie Lewellyn. The wind was dry and cool now and the sun was gone, but just barely, so we had plenty of indirect lighting. We sat and smoked and after a while I stood up and started looking around for the road that had to be there somewhere. I looked until my eyes ached and finally I stooped and got Virginia up on my shoulders, astride the back of my neck.

In a minute or so, she said, "I don't actually see a road. But I see what looks like the edges of where a road ought to be. And even if it isn't, this is a damn fool way to look for a road to the shaft. If it goes to the shaft you ought to start looking for it at the mine."

"Check."

"And the truth is," Virginia said as I set her down on the top of the slanting rock, "you wanted to come up here and kill some time. I feel the same way, but what I want to see is our hollow cooking rock where you used to cremate the eggs."

We went and looked at the hollow rock and the ashes were still in it, protected from the wind there.

Then we went to the shaft and found the road that, of course, had to be there; because any time there is a mine there's got to be a link with a main road or a railroad and there were no rails near the thing, the closest, long unused, being down in town.

The road from the mine shaft was packed hard, and it was clear of boulders, leading almost straight down the slope to the main road that ran from Cripple Creek to Colorado Springs, maybe a half-mile long. Its narrowness worried me, and the fact it was banked high on both sides with drifts of broken stone so that it was really a trench rather than a road. It was a kind of ditch. From the main road to the mine shaft, with no room to turn around when you reached the mine. Beyond the shaft there was a broad clearing, but for our purposes it might as well have been in Egypt. We'd have to back into the mine road from the main road, and go it in reverse the entire distance.

I explained this to Virginia.

"Pulling a trailer's one thing and backing it's another. In a car when you want to back your tail to the right you cut the wheels to the right. You want to back left, you cut left."

"No kidding," she said.

"Now wait a minute, with a trailer you cut right and the thing behind you backs left. That much I know."

"I bet I can do it," she said.

She had her troubles, but she could do it.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The last week of waiting in Denver was the worst of all. I got into my dreams about Jeepie pretty deep there at the last in the back bedroom of the brick house on Milligan. The dreams hadn't bothered me when I was working at Morris-Myers, maybe because I was too tired nights, and if that's the way of it I'll have to admit that honest labor has its points. I still can't subscribe to it a hundred per cent because my dad was an honest laborer and for forty years he pulled teeth honestly and soberly with his nickel-plated pliers, until he found out he was wasting his time on people who didn't ever intend to pay him. Yes, sir, he was honest as they come, for a long time, and I imagine you could gravel a mile of country road with the unpaid-for teeth he pulled. Of course I don't know how any of it affected his dreams and even at his worst he surely never dreamed anything like Jeepie on the concrete wall, his face welling red and then black, but never spilling a drop of blood on the clean concrete. Jeepie's real voice was slow and low, but in the dreams on the wall it roared louder and louder and more profane. Sometimes it whined like a bomb. Sometimes it didn't come from the wall in the dreams, but from a lonely little plane high in the gray sky, crawling slowly as a sick bug on a dirty ceiling, the voice huge as the plane was tiny. The voice always said about the same thing. What it amounted to when you boiled it down and subtract the armored cars and heistman philosophy was: *People are no damned good. Get yours, boy, while there's some left. And get it while you're young enough to live it up.*

But the last night, the night of August thirtieth, I slept like a baby.

When I'd got up the next morning and cleaned my teeth I went in the kitchen, and Virginia had a fine mess of those little pork-link sausages I like. She'd already eaten and she put my eggs on and gave me my coffee, hot and good, the way you can never get it in restaurants or hotels, even the best of them. She gave me the food and sat down across from me. "How you feel, Tim?"

I chewed the toast, smiling at her. "Let's don't talk right now. This is too good to spoil."

"All right."

When I'd finished we went up front and I looked out through the glass in the door and there was Mr. Damon in his yard, just like any other day. It was strange he could be moving around exactly the same as usual, that the same wife with the same diabetes and the troublesome toes could be waiting inside for him the way she had yesterday. Because I felt so different myself. As if I were charged with cool electricity that washed me down inside and out and at the same time scared me and relieved me. That's fancy as hell, isn't it? But it's fancy because it's so and not because I want to dress it up.

We had everything packed except what we'd bought in Denver, that wouldn't fit in the bags and it was in the trunk of the Packard along with the suitcases.

I went out and checked the trunk of the car, looked at the gas and oil gauges and kicked the tires. Old Lady Massengale came out on her porch and said my, wasn't it a nice day and that her granddaughter was going to visit her this afternoon and she'd like us to come over and have some coffee with her and her daughter. She said her husband was downtown at the Legion hall, sounding very proud that her husband had been able to go downtown all by himself. He had a Silver Star medal and a Good Conduct medal in a box with a glass face on it, medals he won as a platoon leader in the first war. The Legion meant a lot to him. And now he was so old his wife was silly with pride over the fact he could find his way downtown. And what had he got out of the years? A bald granddaughter and a railroad pension just big enough to let him sit on his own porch and cluck in the dusk and look at his medals. And, of course, the Legion membership.

We cleaned out the ice box at lunch, eating a scarey assortment of pickles and cheese and store-bought cake and milk.

We phoned the real estate man, or rather Virginia did, and told him we were leaving the key in the mailbox, and that someday we hoped to be back in Denver, and so on. And by one o'clock in the afternoon we had the Packard and trailer beneath the porte-cochere of the old Goyer place on Duchesne. By this time I'd lost a lot of that electricity I told you about. Maybe it was the pickles and cake. Maybe it was something else. I only know that my hand shook when I lit Virginia's cigarette and that she looked at me thoughtfully and said, "Tim, if it can be done you can do it."

"Thanks."

She grinned. "And it can damned well be done."

I took her handbag from her lap, flipped the tortoise shell latch, and removed her shiny little automatic, the toy I'd given her the night we came home from Mamie's. The gun looked like one of those things at the carnival where you throw hoops and try to win it. It was no longer than my hand and didn't look as if it would kill a flea. That was very funny, as you will see. I thumbed the release of the clip and checked her ammunition, little baby-bullets with coppery noses like costume jewelry. I replaced the full clip and jerked the chromed jacket back to full-cock position, pleased that it slid nicely, pumping a cartridge into the chamber when I let it go. "You ever shoot one of these, baby?"

"No," she said, "but it must be just like pointing your finger."

"That's right, they say that's why in the newspaper when you read about a housewife shooting her man, he generally stays shot. Women don't complicate shooting with a lot of stylized foolishness. The average housewife has had plenty of practice pointing her finger at her old man when he comes home late nights. Then when she gets really sore

at him and points a gun instead of a finger it hits him where it hurts."

"I'm no housewife."

"No, but you've some of the symptoms."

It was comfortable under the porte-cochere and I felt better until later when I got the knife out of the glove compartment. There was an oilstone in there, wrapped in the same cloth with the knife so that they came out together in my hand. I unrolled them from the oily rag and began whetting the blade against the stone. It sounded like when you scrape your fingers on a blackboard.

"That part of it," she said. "I wish there wasn't that part of it."

"You want me to jump in there with him and strangle him with kisses?" All of a sudden I was mad and sick. I loathed the sound of the knife on the oilstone. I wanted to throw it in her face and get out of the car and start running, anywhere, just running. I wiped the blade and put the stone and rag back in the glove compartment. I got out. I had to. I had to start moving, even though I knew it would be more than three hours before Car No. 12 made its final stop for the day. At least three hours and maybe a little more. Virginia knew the time schedule as well as I. But I turned and walked on down the driveway and out onto the sidewalk without even telling her good-by. I was going downtown to kill a man who hadn't done a damned thing to me, to kill an old guy whose only fault as far as I knew was throwing chewing gum wrappers in the street. I was going to kill him because I wanted money more than I wanted him to live and I was going to kill him filthily. Or maybe I wasn't. Maybe he was going to kill me and go on the rest of his life with the gum wrappers. I know now that I would have probably backed out of it if it hadn't been for Virginia and the desire to remain a big bad lad in her eyes. Anyway, I didn't want any mushy farewell business with Virginia, no sentimental sendoff. Not for a thing like this.

Walking toward the town I thought automatically of how Jeepie would have felt. And then I thought, for the very first time: goddamn Jeepie to hell.

I've thought it a hundred times since, but that was the first time and it shook me up.

I drank a Coke in the Tuscany bar on Fifteenth. It tasted like gasoline. I went out and got a newspaper and came back into the Tuscany and sat in a booth with another Coke and the paper. Waiting. Somehow it got to be three o'clock. I bought myself a double I. W. Harper and water and four o'clock came around faster and then I went outside, walking toward the three-story building on Essex, not fast, but not slow, the whisky glowing just right in me.

CHAPTER NINE

If I tried to give you any kind of detailed breakdown on what I did between the time I arrived at the building and the time Car No. 12 clanked to a halt there, I'd be lying. I recall such things as the way the sidewalk gritted under my shoes and how there seemed to be more people swarming in and out of, and along the front of the building than I'd ever seen there before. I recall that the day was bastardly hot for the first of September a mile above sea-level and that a faded woman in what looked like an Eisenhower jacket kept coming back again and again trying to sell me a red paper poppy with a wire stem. I didn't think about anything for any length of time, Virginia, the money, or the woman with the poppies.

Car No. 12 was suddenly there and I was moving around the back of it and the driver was upstairs.

I was wearing a kind of uniform that wasn't a uniform, that I'd bought at Dave Cook's sporting goods a week ago, a thing with powder-blue pants and shirt of worsted wool. It was about the color of the guards' uniforms and I wore a poplin zipper-jacket over it, with a knitted band at the waist, loose enough in the chest to cover the shoulder-holstered .357 S & W. All in all I shouldn't have looked too conspicuous lounging back there at the rear-right corner of Car No. 12, waiting for the custodian to crack the iron door and drop his gum wrapper.



"Hereafter Czewkowiscz, let go of the ball!"

I heard him fussing with the lock before I saw him and when the door opened I pushed the gun in through the crack at an upward angle and that was it. The gun was inside. I was outside looking up at the custodian of Car No. 12, looking between his eyes, along the barrel of the gun. I tried to look friendly for the passersby and it wasn't hard to do because the custodian hadn't done anything to me, not anything at all. Now he backed away from the gun, backing and backing until his legs hit a stool and he sat down, not reaching for anything or talking. Then I was inside there with him, pulling the door shut behind me and there was almost room for me to stand straight. I took the knife out of my left pocket with my left hand according to plan and whipped it behind me and thumbed the button in the handle, feeling the click as the seven-inch blade hopped out of the handle. He never moved from the stool when I swapped hands with the gun and the knife and then the blade was into him and I thought I was going to vomit. The blade crunched going in and somehow I'd never thought much one way or the other about bones. You think of shoving a knife into somebody and the picture is all meat and steel, with no bones.

I opened the panel behind the driver's seat and shoved my right arm and part of my shoulder into the opening and found the inner latch of the door of the driver's cab. The handle of the latch was small and bug-shaped like the nightlatch on the door of a house.

Coming out the back end of the car I jumped and swung the door shut while I was still in the air and it clanged as my feet hit the street. I had his cap on now, the custodian's leather-visored cap and I must have looked very much like an armored car man tending his business. He was bald. In the light of the iron box his head had shone like a pearl, with a lot of pink and blue in it.

In the driver's cab I bridged the ignition switch with a soft thick piece of copper wiring, stomped the starter and pulled away from the curbing. My wrist watch said the entire business cost me only forty seconds and by the time the driver came down and looked around I'd be under the porte-cochere at the Goyer mansion. With luck. With only the weakest kind of luck. Then at the second stop-light I caught the red and a young cop came off the corner curbing or somewhere and rapped on the glass with his knuckles. My belly hopped up in my chest and froze, like an ice cube goosed from its socket in one of those rubber trays. If I'd had only the money, the fear would have been smaller. But I had the old man back there lying on the canvas sacks by the stool, seven inches of spring-steel in his wishbone. The light turned green and someone honked behind me, but the cop kept hitting harder on the bullet-proof window and yelling and I couldn't hear anything he said. Then I saw he was smiling and I smiled back at him, my lip so dry it hung on my teeth. But the smile was good enough for him and he waved me on. To this day I don't know the score there. Maybe he thought at first I was a buddy. Men with guns are a kind of fraternity, men with guns and uniforms.

The armored car drove like any good truck, sluggish in traffic but manageable. The brakes were fine and the steering stiff but true and everybody gave me plenty of room with those slab iron fenders.

If anybody saw it, Car No. 12, thick with aluminum paint and the sunlight popping off its rivets, must have been a crazy sight rolling into the driveway at the Goyer place. I shoved it in second for the climb to the porte-cochere and the house-trailer was there under the porte-cochere, hitched to the Packard, but I couldn't see Virginia. The rear wall or drawbridge was down on the trailer and I rolled right up inside pulling as close to the left inner wall of the trailer as possible. When the nose of the armored car hit the braided rope girdle stretched across the inside of the trailer it pulled the drawbridge up into place with a slam, the rope sliding noiselessly in the pulleys I'd strung and greased. Presto no drawbridge. Just an innocent rear wall. Slick as a baby's tail. Looking at it from the outside you'd see nothing unusual, because I had painted it a dead salmon like the rest of the surface and had even dented it with a hammer in places.

The only door you'd see would be the two and one-half foot wide side door. It'd never occur to you anybody could squeeze a whole armored car in a slit like that, would it?

Or so I hoped.

I beeped twice gently on the horn of the armored car inside the house-trailer. I heard the engine of the Packard and then its tires biting into the crushed rock of the driveway, and off we went.

God bless Virginia, woman of women, peerless driver of Packards.

After we'd been rolling a while I got out of the armored car's cab, on the right side, where I'd left almost two feet of space inside the trailer by parking jam against the left inner wall.

I had the custodian's keys and I went around back and unlocked the tail door and climbed in there where he was. And where the money was. Now I got a good look. There was a light in the iron roof and it was fairly strong, hanging inside a metal grill that resembled the blades of an egg beater. We had the Venetian blinds of the trailer down and without the electric light you couldn't've seen your hand before your face. The money-part of Car No. 12 was just a plain cube, except for the stool in the front-left corner and the light. The stool was the spinning kind you see in cheap restaurants, with a disc-seat of wood that had probably been polished by ten or twenty years of rubbing against the seat of the custodian's pants. The wood was worn down so the grain stood out from it, clear as the markings in taffeta. You couldn't look at the custodian's head without looking at the stool and maybe that's why I remember it in exaggerated detail. His neck was crammed sideways between the stool and the partition that separated him from the driver's cab. And it seemed the longer he was dead the balder he looked and the more pearl-like his skull with those pink and blue tones burning in the skin.

The knife in his chest didn't appear a deadly thing. The brown bone handle was neat and dry. He wore it like a stickpin, right through the middle of his black service tie. But I really couldn't look at it for any length of time.

To the right of him, in an untidy mound, were the canvas sacks with the drawstrings and the brass grommets.

I went down on my knees, rocking with the movement of the trailer, and slipped a drawstring loose. There was nothing in the sack but checks, green and yellow ones, some signed on the Trimble National Bank, others on the City National. There were a lot of sacks left and this upset me. I opened another. It was wadded full of checks. No cash. Not any cash at all.

Then I dived into the pile of bags and began tearing at the drawstrings. Checks. More checks. Some of them were pretty big, but I couldn't have bought a cigar with the biggest. The armored car was really rocking around inside the house trailer now and the sweat poured into my eyes and, to make it completely dandy, I was out of cigarettes. I remember sitting back against the wall, holding onto myself and telling myself it wouldn't do any good to blow my cork. Then I blew it, high, wide, and handsome. I laughed. I raved. I punched the canvas sacks with my fists and slung them all over the place, one of them landing atop the bald custodian's head so that he wore it like a gray Tam O'Shanter. Then I jerked the knife out of him. I had to put my foot against his chest to pull it loose from the bone, and when it was free I began slashing at the remaining unopened canvas bags.

Checks. Personal checks.

I was through half the pile of bags before I saw any green. The green of money is like no other green in this world, a dull, careless, relaxed green. It was banded in brown currency wrapper, fifty ones. Under it was another sheath of fifty twenties. The rest was checks.

I think I screamed. I stabbed the knife into another sack, slitting downward toward my knee, hard. The blade bit into my knee and the red oozed wetly against the sliced oilcloth and I hardly felt it. Inside this bag was money and nothing but money, twenties and fifties, all in currency wrappers, edges of the bills flush and smooth so you could read the numbers like a book. Fifty bills to a package. Now and then there were a hundred inside a single wrapper, but most often fifty. There was one stack of a hundred hundreds. I kissed it. I slobbered all over it. It was cool, with only the most barely discernible grain and it shished when you rubbed it together. Only money really shishes. I tore into bag after bag after bag and always there was money, some of it mixed with checks, but it was always there. I felt like kissing the custodian, too. The corners of his purplish old lips were turned up in a little smile as if he were getting his kicks out of it, quietly, but sincerely.

Discounting the checks and totaling up cash alone, there was something under $180,000 in the shipment.

I noticed now that the floor of the armored car was canted down and away from me and I knew Virginia had reached the mountains. I had the money stacked according to the size of the bills. It kept falling over when we hit the bad places in the road. I was soaked with sweat, even the belly of my shorts was glued to me, and I was half nuts with wanting a cigarette, and with wondering if the mountain bumps would drop Car No. 12 right down through the floor of the home-made trailer. Even though the salesman had shown me how the guy who built it used cypress six-by-ones underneath and had bolted them solid with custom-made washers under the heads of the bolts.

When finally she stopped I had to climb first out of Car No. 12, then out of the side door of the trailer, so she was already on the shoulder of the road waiting for me. The country looked like we were somewhere on the other side of Colorado Springs. Before I could be certain, she grabbed me. I won't say she kissed me. But bit me on the mouth and scratched my arms like a crazy cat and she told me I was wonderful, which was something brand new.

"Now," she said, standing back from me, "put on your tourist's cap with the long bill, and your dark glasses."

I pulled her against me and she sort of shinnied up me without putting her hands on me and without moving her feet, and then we started all over. It was as if she wanted to claw and chew me open and crawl inside me and if you think that's bad, take my word for it, it's good.

I said, "It's dark, baby, I don't need the glasses." And she said, "Tourists don't care if it's dark, they always wear smoked glasses." So she hooked them on my nose. She said she wouldn't wear hers because she had to drive. That was all right with me. The girl *could* drive.

During the rest of the drive she treated me like a husband who's come home from the office after a hard day's work and told his wife about a fine promotion. She lit cigarettes for me from the dashboard lighter. She played the radio, asking me if I like this program or that one, and did she have it tuned in too loud for me? She patted my leg and when I dozed she took the curves tenderly lest she shake me around. And when she couldn't stand it any longer she asked me how much money was in the armored car. I stretched, yawned, and rubbed the back of my neck: "Eighty-eight thousand, two hundred and twenty-two."

"Exactly?"

"More or less. Give or take a couple of Cadillacs."

"How much more or less?"

I scratched my head. "Oh, five hundred either way. You were rocking me around back there. The counting was kind of slapstick."

"How slapstick?"

"All right, there's a cool eighty-nine grand."

"Oh, Tim, you wonderful bastard."

"The rest of it was in checks."

"You're wonderful."

"Baby," I said, "don't you realize I'd be the first one to know a thing like that?" I stretched again, carefully. You have to guard against crackling when your pockets are padded with C notes. Even old ones. Later I could wad them into the hub-caps of the Packard or let the air out of the spare and stash some of them there. I wondered if she'd felt anything when she was clawing at me.

We spent the night near our old campsite above Cripple Creek and the first thing I did was change clothes in the dark on the other side of the car and stuff the ones I was wearing in my bag. I locked the suitcase. The rest of the money, the eighty-nine thousand I intended to split with her, was still scattered inside the armored car.

What I wanted to do that night was back the trailer up to the shaft of the abandoned Katie Lewellyn and unhitch it and push the trailer and armored car and dead man over the rim of the shaft in one lump. After we'd cleaned out the rest of the cash. There would be no competent evidence against us if we backed the trailer in there. And without the trailer dragging behind us we'd be hell to catch. What I hadn't figured on, however, was the fact backing a trailer that distance along a road that is really nothing more than a ditch, with stone tailings piled twelve feet high to right and left, is a rough operation in broad daylight. At night it's impossible.

Virginia reminded me.

She said the only thing to do was wait for proper light, goose the trailer along the trench in the dawn hours while the tourists were safe in their rented beds at the Imperial. She said meantime she had something for me. It was Southern Comfort, a sweet syrupy fifth of it, and we sampled and sampled in the moonlight until we were numb as skunks. I took her in and showed her the money and we came out and got even number, although I wouldn't have thought it possible. Later I remember spreading our sleeping bag in the rocks and stuffing grass and bushes under it for a mattress. While I was doing this Virginia was getting undressed, and when I was finished I looked the place over and couldn't find her. I was as I said in a fine painless trance, but I was aware enough to look in the back of the Packard and check the lock on my suitcase. I began stumbling around calling her, keeping it low, and I went and looked in the bathing pool cut into the rock on the slope. but she wasn't there. I came back and searched dizzily under the trailer, muttering the way drunks do, and then I heard it. A shuffling around inside the trailer. The little tramp had knocked me in the head with her Southern Comfort and now she was in there loading up.

It wasn't easy to get inside now and it was less easy to work my way between the outer wall of the armored car and the inner wall of the trailer until I could get in where the money was. I saw the light inside the armored car, glowing in slitted shapes through the steel. The rustling was louder.

She was sitting on the floor, naked, in a skitter of green bills. Beyond her was the custodian, still simpering in death. She was scooping up handfuls of the green money and dropping it on top of her head so that it came sliding down along the cream-colored hair, slipping down along her shoulders and body. She was making a noise I never heard come out of a human being. It was a scream that was a whisper and a laugh that was a cry. Over and over. The noise and the scooping. The slippery, sliding bills against the rigid body.

She didn't know I was alive.

I awoke with the moonlight blazing against my face and the first thing I thought about was the custodian. Coming out of a deep sleep and thinking about him, it was stale and unreal and it didn't seem he could possibly be as dead as before. I started to get up and go in there and look at him. I had a sudden feeling he was gone, out walking in the rocks, his pearl pate shining in the moon. Because he hadn't died by degrees like a person on a sickbed and the last time I saw him alive he was strictly alive even if he was scared stiff. The thought of the knife, even now, made me want to be sick and the hangover worked in the same direction. I pushed up on one elbow and started to sit up. But Virginia pulled me down.

We managed to get out of the sleeping bag at dawn, shivering in the cold as we dressed, but feeling relieved to be getting on with the last of the plan. Virginia was whistling as she climbed beneath the wheel of the Packard.

As I sit here writing about what happened to us and trying to take it right down the line from the bathtub in Krotz Springs to the very end, so much comes back it's hard to pick and choose which parts of it tell the story best. Back at Parchman the two or three fellows closest to me said I had too much imagination of the wrong kind and that I wasted too much time worrying about things I couldn't control. Jeepie said that was why I was always a little bugs the first few days after they let me out of solitary confinement. He said solitary itself was nothing but a room and a cot and you; and the room was a blank to begin with and a blank was comfortable as being asleep or dead. But that if you began filling the room with crazy thoughts you came out of it crazy. Jeepie said perhaps my biggest trouble was I could never forget I'd been to school: "They've taught you that to think is to be smart—but my friend there's times when it's smart to be stupid."

But no one's immune to thinking. Try drawing a blank for any length of time, emptying your head of everything and still you land on a color, a shape, a personality, a grievance. I can sit here on this cot in my cell and stare at the plaster wall, go absolutely limp in my head, and the story, the story of Virginia and me is there in the plaster. At night in the dark it unreels very clearly even as I try to suck the darkness into my head hoping to blot the other out of there. Writing it down brings me no relief from thinking, but it does somehow take the curse off the blackest parts of it so that later when they flash on the screen inside me they do not burn me so, and I can say: I admitted I did it. I confessed it on a piece of paper. I never told any of it in the courtroom. I didn't tell it before that when they strapped me over the car and used the burning cigars on me. I didn't say anything. But I've put it all on the paper and the paper under my mattress and while it doesn't get it out of me, it dilutes it.

Now let's dilute the morning we dropped the trailer and Car No. 12 and the custodian into the shaft of the Katie Lewellyn. It can stand some diluting. Because I keep thinking of the custodian down there in the blackness, floating forever, his face bobbling against the slits in the steel wall, waiting for the driver to come out of the building on Essex. And I think of his companion down there. God knows I think of his companion.

It must have been five o'clock when Virginia started backing the trailer from the main road to the square hole in the ground in the shadow of the tall leaning building.

She had no trouble. It was pure anticlimax. For a while I walked backward behind the trailer and slightly to the left side of dead center, yelling clearance directions.

When the rear of the trailer was within fifteen feet of the hole I sang out for her to halt it there. We could cut it loose, nudge it and let it go. I turned my back on the rear of the trailer and looked at a slant at the far wall of the abandoned shaft. I looked away quickly and, with the image of swirling subterranean waters running cold in my thoughts, I surveyed the height of the piled-rock walls of the road leading to the shaft. With the road walled in except for the final few feet in front of the hole it was a cinch. You could compare it with rolling a billiard ball down a gutter.

The engine of the car idled, then roared, and I twisted around in time to see the rear end of the trailer almost on me, a blur of salmon paint and sheet iron.

I ran sideways until I was able to circle the lip of the shaft and I sat down there, shaking. The door of the car slammed. I heard her feet on the rock, then a long pause, and she came around the corner of the trailer, smiling. The back of the trailer was some three feet from the edge of the hole, but she threaded it coolly, coming to me and sitting beside me. Her eyes were very clear, the whites blue-white as an infant's. She wore a plaid-wool skirt and a cashmere sweater that made the most of her figure. A heartwarming sight. And I knew as well as I knew the smell and taste of her that she had tried to panic me into stumbling into the shaft. I knew it because I had seen her sliding those green bills over her skin, bathing in them, praying to them. What she said now was: "Tim, I thought we ought to get close as possible—cut the chances of snagging on the rocks when we push her."

I watched her and there was nothing in her face but health and sweetness and light. "Sure, Virginia."

"Where'll we go first—to spend our money?"

"Where'd you like?"

"New Orleans."

"Why not?"

"I want to stay at the St. Charles Hotel and sit up there on the balcony on the mezzanine thing and look down through the wrought iron at the Frenchy people."

I smiled, pulling my left elbow into my chest so that I could feel the shape of the gun in its holster. I made it look as if I were scratching. If she wanted to play it girlish, I'd play it boyish. I'd scratch. My gun. The time had come to kill Virginia. It gave me no pleasure to review my fat-headed softening processes, my love-love-all-over-the-world trend. The wind was cold. My hands trembled as I stood and took her hands and pulled her up against me so that her back was to the shaft. And now I was holding her by the shoulders, our combined shadow black in the sunrise, bending over the edge of the pit and dissolving somewhere in that awfulness.

But I couldn't push her into it—any more than I could have jumped into it.

Later, when we cut the trailer loose and shoved it in, it must have caught on something two or three hundred feet down. There was one soft metallic scream. After that it was quiet as if we'd dropped it in a black velvet sack, except for a dim splash and the tiniest of tinkles.

I breathed a great breath of relief. Trying to hide a trailer is pretty much like trying to hide a brick on a ping-pong table. Unless, that is, you find yourself a hole the size of the Katie Lewellyn.

CHAPTER TEN

I'm no authority on New Orleans wrought iron, but I can say the French or Spanish or whoever, had themselves something when they thought of installing it along the edges of balconies. I found that around the mezzanine of the St. Charles Hotel there were so many differently shaped openings in the railing that you could see almost anyone you wished to watch below in the lobby, without moving from your chair near the rim of the balcony. All you had to do was move your head slightly. And that appealed to me, especially after the evening I'd spotted Clell Dooley down in the lobby. Clell was my good FBI friend who had packed me off to Parchman in the dim days of poverty, packed me off with a sincere little lecture on borrowing other people's automobiles. But he had been checking out at the desk of the hotel when I spied him, so I stayed on, happy in the knowledge his headquarters was in Jackson, not New Orleans. Now that I was rich I worried a lot more than I had on the Atchafayala or in Denver or Cripple Creek about someone recognizing me as a fellow wanted at Parchman. I'd grown an Englishy polo-playing mustache and now wore spectacles with more shell rim than glass in them, but I worried. Or let's say I didn't worry more, but that I worried harder, because all my life I'd wanted to live lazily and glossily, and now I had it and didn't want it taken away from me. Before I became rich it was only a matter of hanging onto life, a good, rugged, animalistic, instinctive thing that kept me hard and on my toes. This was different, this petulant, craven business of sweating over my wealth, and over what it was doing to Virginia. Since we had come to New Orleans and begun spending on a fairly fat scale, she wasn't the same girl. She spent much time in bed, and bathing and primping, and every morning there was a gold-toothed woman up in the room messing with Virginia's hair and patting lotion into her chin and such general foolishness. And we'd got in with a nighttime crowd of wealthy youngsters and this crowd was quarterbacked by a brother-sister team whose father owned a salad-dressing factory or something like that. The brother, Eddie Arceneaux, announced at intervals that he was going to seduce Virginia and travel the world with her. And the sister, Loralee, announced after about the same number of cocktails, that she was going to seduce me and make a salad-oil king of me. If you don't find this humorous, I can say only that I didn't either, but in the crowd we'd adopted this was a rousing good joke and everyone laughed about it. They all had money to burn, or if they didn't, managed to give that impression, and they laughed about everything. I remember they made jokes about such things as incest and sodomy, and their idea of a big night was to taxi down in the French Quarter and giggle at the queers who put on a floor show down there. I'd never thought being rich was anything like that, and still didn't believe it had to be, or else there wouldn't have been the steadfast desire to hang onto my own pile. They worked so hard at being individuals. Eddie wore a green canvas rain-hat everywhere he went, even with formal clothes, and he looked like an exhausted cat peering out from under a collard leaf. Loralee did it with bracelets, pounds of

them, which dangled and jangled, and with dresses that left her sun-tanned breasts very much on display. Both she and Eddie were married to somebody or other but, despite the strings of parties, I never saw her husband with her but once and I never saw Eddie's wife at all. The married couples swapped around and played grabby in dark corners and all in all it was enough to make you want to stick your finger down your throat. If you're going to be married, really married under the law, you have no business rolling around that way with all comers. Coming from me that must be hard to swallow, but it's the way I felt. I'd rather kill a man I don't know and who never did anything to me than have my own children know I slept all over town just for the exercise of it. Virginia, of course, took to it like a duck takes to water. In New York she'd had a sustained taste of five-hundred-dollar nights, wealthy men, and top restaurants before she was hounded into flight. And on top of that, according to Mamie, the Unique Massager, Virginia came from quality stock, whatever that is nowadays. Now, when we were down at the yacht basin with the others, she and Eddie had a way of disappearing. At first I didn't think much of it. I was too busy being amazed by myself, at the fact that I could write large checks and hand them to someone and point at what I wanted and get it. My shoes got better and better until they were bench-made ones at sixty dollars a crack, and the bench-made ones never felt as easy as the cheaper ones. I got into cameras, not because I especially liked to take pictures, but because the stainless steel and pebbled leather and gleaming glass looked pretty to me. I started off with an Eastman Medalist, tired of it and bought me a Rolleiflex because I'd heard Life photographers go for it; then I discarded it and paid over four hundred dollars for a thirty-five millimeter Exakta with a 1.2 lens. And so with suits and shirts and ties until I had so much stuff I couldn't concentrate on any of it long enough to enjoy it, so I became sick of all of it. These were the things I thought of as I sat on the mezzanine of the St. Charles and looked down at the lobby through the ironwork, waiting for night. It seems that when you're rich you do a lot of waiting for night, since daylight is neither sophisticated nor secretive and is more or less devoted to perspiring and recovering.

Now Virginia was upstairs with the hairdresser and I sat on the rim of the mezzanine, legs crossed, polishing the heel of my shoe with my thumb and peeking through the decoration below the railing.

Peeking, as a cultural instrument, must have come into its own with invention of the lacework balcony. This not only affords the aforementioned screen for the observer, but allows him such a variety of metal frames for the object of observation as to keep the game fresh. A fat woman in a mustard-colored dress viewed through any one of the four right angles of an iron cross, appears symbolic, dignity in every scallop of powdered flesh, a champion of all fat women who own mustard-colored dresses. But the same women in the same dress, viewed through a series of interlocking circles of iron—the St. Charles offers these, too—appears ludicrous and entangled, drowning in iron ripples.

By moving my head a matter of inches I was able to see her alternately in both the symbolic and drowned shapes and I did this for maybe a minute or two before it struck me that the fat woman looked familiar.

I slid deeper in my chair and studied her through the spaces in a cluster of hand-forged grapes. It was Mrs. McDonald, Lila McDonald, who lived in the corner house next door to us when I was a kid in Masonville. She looked no older or younger, no bigger or smaller, and the little ready-to-cry mouth was the same. She looked more like she used to than she used to, if that makes sense. She stood by the fluted pedestal of a lamp, looking toward the desk, now and then cupping one elbow in a hand and patting her right cheek, as if to say: "Now, now, Lila, don't you cry. George is coming and everything will be all right." And as I remembered George always came and made everything all right, and I wondered how that gray quiet little man had weathered the years with this fat bag of tears in the lobby, and what they were doing here.

I remembered how after my dad died my mother and Mrs. McDonald were forever crying together. They cried buckets when President Roosevelt died and they liked to go to the movies together and cry with June Allison in those scenes where June thought her man had died or had run off with someone else. If one of them got a bad letter in the mail they'd meet out on the lawn and hug and weep and if George McDonald was home he'd come out and pat them both on the back. Then the two women would go into the McDonald kitchen, or ours, and eat like hogs, syrup and butter and cold biscuits, cold cornbread and mustard greens, washing it down with a whole pot of scalding coffee and talking about what had made them cry. They were in perfect tune, in that they began crying at the same time and stopped at almost the same time. They cried frequently over me and the way I acted when I got out of service. They cried and prayed over the shell splinter in my head that the VA surgeon said would have to stay in there the rest of my life. And at night my mother would come in my room when I got home and cry and cry over the way my breath smelled and over what people were saying about me. But that's all. She never sat down and told me what an ass I was with my money-hunger and my new redhot war-hero toughness and get-rich-quick plans. She died while I was in Parchman. I was sorry about that. But I still say you can't cry good sense into a kid's head.

Well, Mrs. McDonald had no kids to worry her to death and from the looks of her down there in the lobby she would live on and on until she pickled her cheeks in her own brine.

I started to push my chair back and get up and go to the room and see if the hairdresser had gone. Then I felt a hand on my shoulder and I looked up into the eyes of George McDonald. He was smiling in a way that lit up his worn gray face and in a way nobody had smiled at me in a long time. With his hand still on my shoulder he leaned out over the balcony, and called: "Lila, Lila honey, come on up here."

I froze to my chair.

"I been writing a letter up here," George said, "asking old M.G. if I could stretch my vacation to eight days." He waved toward the writing tables along the wall. "I'm still with Tate-Roberts, son. Seems like that one-week vacation gets shorter every year."

Mrs. McDonald arrived, puffing from the stairs.

"Mother, you remember Kenneth," George McDonald said. "Kenneth McLure."

I got up and shook her hand, feeling as if I were sixteen years old and sixteen feet tall and that everybody in the lobby was staring up at us. Mrs. McDonald said sure she remembered Kenneth. She began dabbing at her eyes with a blue handkerchief. "We've wondered about you," she said. "Everyone asks about you. 'Specially Nona. She's a fine girl, Kenneth."

Nona. I'd given Nona my gold football. I'd held her in the swing down the block, on her front porch, back in the days when holding hands was a lovely explosion, when homemade pimiento cheese sandwiches and lemonade were manna from heaven. How many years ago? How many years since those pimiento flavored kisses? And: *I can't marry you, Nona, you or anybody. We don't want that. We don't want the listless, automatic desire of marriage. This is what we want, baby. Some day I'll come back. Some day. You'll see.*

"She *is* a fine girl," I said to Mrs. McDonald who continued the dabbing with the handkerchief.

"She's working at the phone company," George said uncomfortably. "Bright. That girl's got bright brains."

"Yes." I couldn't listen to much more of it. I felt like taking Mrs. McDonald's handkerchief and squalling into it. And for me, that's something. That's too much. But this dumpy red-eyed woman and the tired little man with the admiring friendly eyes, brought the town of Masonville with them, blotting out the soft music of the public address system in the lobby, melting the worldly people in the lobby. The familiarity of their voices caught hold of something in me, pullingly, unraveling me.

"Mother and I were going down to the drugstore," George said, "to get us something to drink." He said it hopefully, making an invitation of it. He was going to get him a milkshake to celebrate his vacation, to celebrate thirty years at Tate-Roberts. And he wanted me along, because once he'd sold casting rods and plugs to my father, and he'd sold me my first pair of skates in the oily-smelling respectable gloom of Tate-Roberts.

"We'd like you to come see our room, too," George said. "We're not staying here, you know, I just came to use the stationery because St. Charles stationery is nice to get a letter on." He laughed. "And it'll puzzle old M.G."

I made quite a show of writing down their New Orleans address and tucking it into my wallet, and I said I wouldn't be able to go to the drugstore but I would look them up tomorrow for sure.

They believed it.

But hell, I couldn't bother with them, could I? Why I had hand-stitched lapels and a truckload of money in a dozen or more banks and these were the things I wanted. I ate *trout amandine* at Antoine's whenever I wanted it and I never even thought of pimiento cheese any more, not once in ten years, nor of a swing in the moonlight in Masonville. I had my own private woman, or my own fairly private one, and if I grew tired of her I could always sit at the desk in the salad oil factory. For a while. Until someone tapped me on the shoulder. Until someone reminded me I had standing reservations at Parchman, and at Denver, too.

But they really believed I'd visit them tomorrow, the McDonalds did.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Virginia was in bed, all frou-froued up in a pink robe with some kind of white fur around the collar. The fur was so silky the air-conditioning made it move. She was eating a thick cube of a kind of candy they call Heavenly Hash in New Orleans, and now and again she took a straight raw sip of bourbon and turned the page of her book. Eddie had told her that bourbon and chocolate were the thing, that the sugar supercharged the alcohol and made you "think prettier."

"We're getting out of here," I said, going on into the bathroom and starting the water in the sunken tub.

"We?" she said.

I came back into the bedroom, slapped the box of candy off the bed, and threw her book in a corner. "Yes, *we*."

"Don't make me laugh."

I bent over and picked up a piece of the

candy. It is a sandwich of slab chocolate and marshmallow filled with chopped almonds. In New Orleans they use almonds in everything but iced tea. I stretched the marshmallow and held it before her face. "You know, you're getting to look like that."

"Tim, what in the name of God's eating you now?" She sat up, fluffing her fur, looking rather fat. "You never had it so good."

I dropped the candy on the rug. "I never wanted it so good." The water in the tub was almost running over when I went back to it, so I stripped down and climbed in and settled down to my chin. I'd always wanted to bathe in a tub like that and to use the little wafers of packaged soap they have in good hotels and to climb out on clean tile and dry myself on an armful of fresh towels. That had been part of the dream. But two months in this tub and I found it meant nothing to me, no more than the Exakta camera and the rest. I thought now of the bath I'd taken in Krotz Springs the night I met Virginia, of the wonderful bath in the old-fashioned tub with the rim of rolled iron.

Without enthusiasm I began sloshing the suds over my shoulders and then I heard voices in the bedroom. Virginia's voice first, then Eddie's. Then Loralee's. They thought it was absolutely cute to drop in without phoning, any time of day or night. Or, at the other end of the scale, to phone they were coming and then not to show. Just to get you out of bed. It was part of being individual, unfettered. "Jennie," Loralee said to Virginia, "someone's been walking around in your candy."

"That's Tim. His feet get tired and he says there's nothing like marching on marshmallows."

Loralee came into the bathroom, her unfettered smile bright and a little drunk. "Hullo, hullo."

I said hello.

It was the first time we'd ever been in a bathroom together and it was the first time she had seen me naked, but none of it dented the salad-oil poise, the money-poise. She came over and got down on her knees by the side of the tub and kissed me and breathed her martinis in my face.

This done to her satisfaction she arose and locked the bathroom door from the inside.

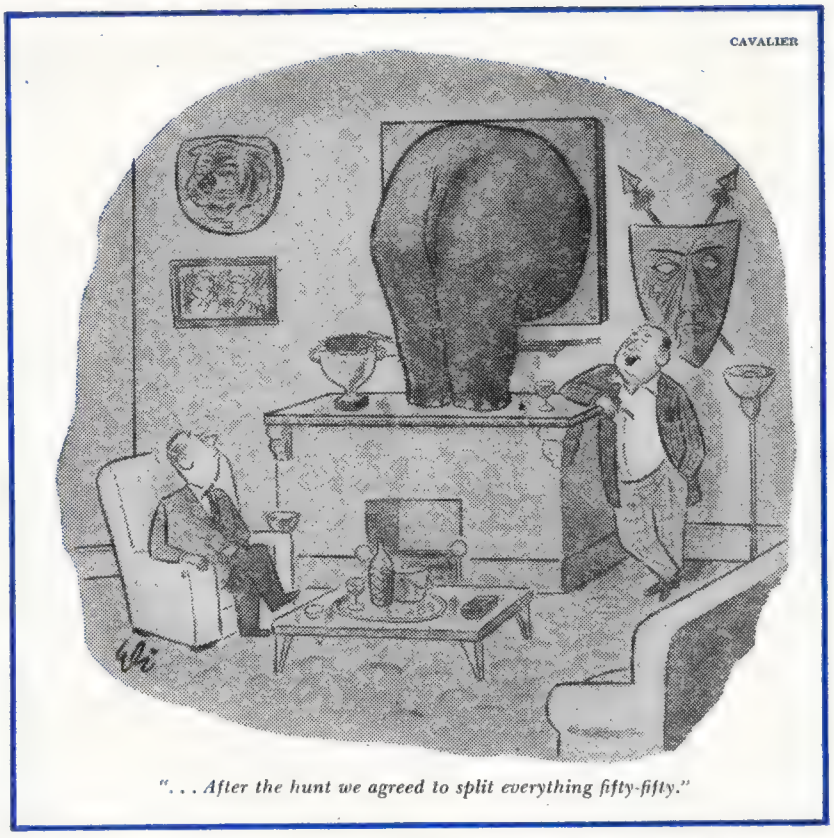
There was no sound from Eddie and Virginia in the bedroom. Loralee's martini breath expanded in the steam of the bathroom, but it was not a bad smell and I did not want it. How she lived the way she did and yet looked like that, the dark hair snapping with light, the eye limpid, how she could look half-nutty with health, I didn't know and still don't. She was like the pictures of women you see in the breakfast food ads, all energy and pinkness and shining hair.

We must have spent over an hour in there. But finally I decided we should have us a look in the bedroom.

It was empty and the candy was still on the floor.

"Eddie's seduced her," Loralee said, jangling her soapy bracelets. "He's seduced her, and run off with her."

I poured a three-inch drink and drank it and sat down on the bed. "I don't care if he creams her and serves her with almonds." Loralee poured me another drink. She loved to see people drink. So did Eddie. Next to pouring whisky into themselves they doted on funneling it into other people and telling other people just how it should be drunk and why it should be drunk that certain way and what it did to you if you drank it this way. And what it did if you drank it the wrong way. Loralee came through now: "Two big straight ones with no water are the same as four straight ones water-chased."



". . . After the hunt we agreed to split everything fifty-fifty."

She sat in my lap. "You're so soothing, Tim."

What with Loralee's well-earned reputation for nymphomania, I guess I had been rather soothing.

Now that the excitement was gone, I was just as disgusted as I'd been a while before on the mezzanine. And I was jealous of Eddie and wanted to know where he'd taken Virginia. Loralee kissed me too much, one time too many, and I put the heel of my hand in her face and shoved her over backward and her head hit the rug with a thump, gold bracelets jingling.

When she sat up she had a hunk of Heavenly Hash in her dark brown hair. But the money-poise was with her. She removed the candy, dropped it in a wastebasket, and said, "You're soothing, but you're an awful skunk after you've soothed a girl."

"Get out of here."

"You're a sprinter," Loralee said calmly. "There's nothing so dull as a sprinter." She didn't throw anything or raise her voice. She just walked out, gracefully, looking very healthy.

Virginia came in about three in the morning, alone, and I was glad she was alone because I didn't want to see Eddie and his green canvas hat. I had our bags packed and I phoned downstairs and told the room clerk to send a boy up for them and for the boy to bring change for a dollar. I was sick of buying smiles from bellhops at a dollar a smile. I'd had it. I was sick of Virginia, too, and of what the money had done to the both of us, changing a tough, elegant adventuress with plenty of guts and imagination into a candy-tonguing country club Cleopatra who nested in bed the whole day long and thought her feet were too damned good to walk on.

She said she wasn't coming with me.

I said I'd kill her, but it lacked conviction, with the soft nausea of the past two greasy high-on-the-hog months behind me. We were no more the same two people who slept in the rocks and counted our dreams than we were guppies. I loved her and was jealous of her and yet I was sick and ashamed of her, and knew she must be of me. I blamed the armored car money for her cheating on me and for my own cheating and for two months of insane buying and laughing. I blamed it for forcing me to snub the McDonalds, for my fear of anyone hearing them call me Kenneth. Heavenly God. I was running from my own name. I was too stinking rich and bloody and scared to listen to my real name. Love or no love I wanted to be rid of Virginia now, but I was scared to give her freedom because I was afraid of her talking. I spent all my time being scared. When a rich man dies it is more complex than when a poor man dies. A rich man doesn't simply quit living. He quites being rich, too. Of course a poor man quits being poor when he dies, but that is not a thing to lament.

"I said I'm not coming," Virginia repeated.

We stood there knee-high in packed bags, striped ones and leather ones, aluminum ones and plastic ones, all of them very costly, and we stared at each other and I wanted to choke her. I wanted to sink my fingers in that fine hotel fat that was just beginning to show around her neck, and to kill her.

I can see now that about the only thing we had remaining in common that night was a mutual pride in the armored car plan, in the way we worked it together, leaving no sloppy traces behind us, no stray ends. There is pride in work well done, even the nastiest of work. The undertaker is as proud of his well done cadaver as is the sculptor of his best piece. We were a team and a fine one and our pride in our own cleverness and courage during the days in Denver and

Cripple Creek, that was about all we had left us, in the way of a common ground. We thought we were masterminds. We knew we'd picked the perfect place to bury the custodian and Car No. 12 and the trailer and that without competent evidence on which to work the law would have it tough. Or so we believed then.

When the bellhop knocked on the door Virginia let him in, then she sat in a chair and took off her hat and smoked.

I phoned the garage to have the car out front.

I took the .357 Magnum in my fist, draped my topcoat over arm and fist, and said, "Get up while the getting up's good."

She weighed it a minute, then pushed up out of the chair, put on her hat, and that was the last we ever saw of Room 307 in the St. Charles Hotel in quaint, historic old New Orleans.

There have been times when I have missed things about New Orleans since then, but that room I haven't missed at all, not even now. Another month and I might have been bathing with Eddie, or wearing a green canvas hat.

The soft November breezes off the Gulf of Mexico were pleasant and salty, satisfying without being aggressive like the winds of the mountains, and crammed full of oxygen. The high-altitude Westerners are quick to bray about the tonic effect of their winey air, but you never hear them say a thing about oxygen. About the fact it is nice to have oxygen along with the winey business, and that if your pump leaks that marvelous Western air will kill you. Give me the Southern air. Oxygen is the whole idea of breathing.

Close to the shore, beyond the beach to the right of the highway, the Gulf was the color of dishwater. This faded into a pale crumpled green and amethyst and out farther, to turquoise. The sun lay over sand and water and highway, thick and warm as melted butter, and until I noticed this it hadn't occurred to me how much time we'd killed in the hotel room arguing about leaving.

Virginia wasn't having any of it. No sunshine or oxygen for Virginia.

She hadn't said ten words since we left New Orleans and started the drive along the Gulf. I knew that as long as we had to stick together we might as well try to be friendly and on the stretch of road between New Orleans and Biloxi I told her my home town, Masonville, was beyond Biloxi. Between Biloxi and Mobile. "That's great," she said. "I'm dying to see where you spent your mousehood."

I took the bait. "Mousehood?"

"Yes, where you lived while you were growing up to become a rat."

I was thinking of Nona and the McDonalds now. "I don't know anyone there any more," I said. "Most of my bunch has grown up and moved away, because there's no way to make a living there. The only thing there is a plant where they make prickly-heat powder for babies."

"We'll have to see that, too," Virginia said. And that ended it. I didn't want to stop at Masonville and visit because I didn't feel up to doing any explaining about Virginia and about where I had been and was going. The whole town must have known I did time at Parchman and that I had busted out the night Thompson killed the guard and we hog-tied the other two guards and Jeepie died on the wall. Maybe the McDonalds knew it, too, but they certainly hadn't given any indication of it. They wanted me to drink that milkshake with them. Anyway, Masonville was a dangerous place for me. The law knows that a man in trouble is likely, through an instinctive seeking for familiar surroundings, to head back home. I was headed back—but only to pass through, and I'd work it to pass through at night. I wanted to drive past Nona's house and see the old swing there. Perhaps she'd be sitting in it, Nona would. With someone else, some nice quiet fellow who wasn't afraid of his own name, a fellow whose mother ironed his shirts for him and smelled his breath when he came in late.

We stopped at the Edgewater Beach Hotel and spent the rest of that day and the night (it was Saturday night) there; awoke late the next day and breakfast in bed. I was hungrier than I'd been since we left Cripple Creek, and I was oddly excited. Virginia remained silent whenever she could, and that was roughly a hundred per cent of the time.

We had a fine lunch of broiled flounder at the Friendship House between Gulfport and Biloxi, and there were wide clean windows around the restaurant so you could see miles of the Gulf, see such a sweep of it that the curve of the earth was plain where the water met the sky. Virginia chewed without relish. She did not look out the picture windows. The distance between Biloxi and Masonville is only forty-two miles and from the Friendship House to Biloxi is half that, and I was busy trying to figure out a way to kill the hours until darkness, so we'd drive through Masonville at night. The excitement remained with me throughout lunch and later, when we walked down on the beach and along the edge of the dead water. There is no surf on the Mississippi part of the Gulf and little water action of any kind except during storms and hurricanes. The white sand was packed down firm and I took my shoes off and suggested that Virginia do it, too, and that we walk down a ways. "I've never been so goddamn sick of anything," she said resignedly, "as I am of you and your outdoors."

She was much sicker of it by the time we returned to the car. The November sun had reddened her face and her eyes were puffy. But don't get me wrong. Virginia was beautiful, even though the time in New Orleans hadn't done anything for her, inside or out. And I knew she was yearning for the yacht basin and for the partying with all those spritely characters there. Once she'd told me that buddying with the rich made her feel as if her own money were more natural and that she'd always had it and didn't steal it. I told her she didn't have to forget the stealing to feel natural about it, that most of her new friends stole theirs one way or another, or their daddies or granddaddies did. And I reminded her of what she once said: "There's no bad money." Imagine having to remind her, or having to rationalize money for a woman who once stripped down and bathed buck naked in it. At any rate, she was worn out when we returned to the car, having developed, during her recent New Orleans associations, the idea that exercise consumes intelligence.

We ate supper at the Friendship House, after a brief drive through Biloxi and then back to the restaurant; and I killed an hour or so drinking and putting nickels in a machine in the bar. I remember the machine flashed printed questions on a glass face. If you pressed the numbered button corresponding to the number of the right answer you won some nickels. There was only a second or so to pick the proper answers. I couldn't win. Virginia won five times out of five. When we left the bar, the sky was dark.

CHAPTER TWELVE

At Masonville I left the highway, turning left into Walnut and north along it through the downtown section under the queer street lights of striped glass, dim and yellow and familiar, like no lights you'll see anywhere else.

I know every lump and bump in Walnut Street, from the highway intersection to Doc Simrall's Drugs at the far end, and I could close my eyes and tell you by the seat of my pants where I was. I turned right at the drugstore. I got a glance of young faces inside in the three varnished booths where once I'd chopped Nona's initials and mine under a bench, cutting the initials blind, just from feel, and telling her they'd always be under the bench. NH—KM. Always there in their secret hard-to-find place, and no matter how many times Doc sandpapered and plastic-wooded the scars on the tables and the tops of the benches he'd never be able to erase the initials of Nona Hickman and Kenneth McLure.

We left Walnut and three blocks down Sycamore I began straining to see the Hickman place, although I knew it was the last house on the right on the corner of the fourth block. The street light on the corner was the same, of striped glass like the ones in town, the stripes vertical down the sides of the lamp, curving to a point, a dark hub, at the bottom tip where it was loaded with dead moths and night bugs. And Nona's porch and the slatted swing were the same. Except I wasn't on it. And she wasn't there either. I slowed the car to a crawl and circled the block and passed the porch again.

Virginia said, "You in love with that shack?"

I told her to shut up.

We were within three blocks of the Illinois-Central tracks near where North Street runs into West Fourth when I saw the red blinker in the rear-vision mirror and heard the siren begin its long low wailing.

"Tell 'em to shut up," Virginia said. "Tell the police to shut up." She began laughing hysterically as the blinker grew bigger behind us and the noise of the siren increased.

I kicked the Packard up to fifty and we whumped up and over the tracks and had covered most of the half block to the intersection when I heard the shot, the sound of glass shattering, and I braked hard, skidding to a stop on the right side of North near the corner, the squad car swerving wide to miss my rear and then coming to a halt on the opposite side of the street. I heard Virginia fumbling in her purse and it seemed a hell of a time to be counting her money or lipsticking herself. I could see the navy-blue uniforms and the shine of their buttons beneath the street light and all of it seemed to be in slow-motion and almost soundless: only a few sounds, little ones—the buttons of my jacket sleeve against the steering wheel, Virginia fumbling in her purse, the muffled slamming of the doors of the squad car, very dim and somehow out of time, as if we were watching a worn-out film and whoever dubbed in the sound track had made a mess of it. Virginia was giggling and that was dim and far away, too, and my mind was racing back and back as I tried to figure how in God's name they spotted me and why they were looking for me and if this had to do with Parchman or with the dead old man in the armored car at the bottom of the Katie Lewellyn. And if Clell Dooley, my good FBI friend, had, after all, managed to pick up a sniff of me in the St. Charles Hotel the day I saw him checking out. The cop nearest me came across the street to my door and the other one remained on the far side of the squad car, his head and shoulders showing above it. The cop at my door was young and blond and confident and he had a pretty nickel-plated gun in his right hand as he opened the door with his left hand. It was a very pretty gun, I remember that, and as he opened the door I said inanely, "What's wrong, officer?" I said it the way I would have if he'd caught me speeding.

I remember seeing the glow of a flashlight on the windshield and hearing no noise and

he was standing there in the door and then he wasn't. I looked down at my right hand, stunned, halfway expecting to see the .357 Magnum S & W smoking in my fist. But it wasn't there. Then Virginia fired again, past my chest and through the door at the other policeman across the street; out of the corner of my eye I saw the cop across the street rest his forearm against the roof of the squad car. The steel door frame kerwhanged near my cheek as he fired, and then I was out of the Packard and running to get it between me and him and hoping Virginia would have sense enough to do something like that.

Just as I got around to the other side, the Packard's engine howled and the wheels clawed into the road and Virginia took it around the corner on two wheels, the rubber screaming as she swung right into West Fourth, leaving me there in the street with the dead blond boy and the other one behind the squad car still shooting. There was a pause and he must have reloaded, and then he came out from behind the squad car yelling and shooting and I raised my gun then and pulled the trigger fast, twice, and he lay down on the road. He didn't fall—he lay down easy, as if he were crawling into bed, first the palms of the hands, then the knees and the rest. I shoved the gun back into the shoulder holster and looked around me. The squad car was parked in front of a white frame house and now I saw a woman and girl come out on the porch and begin yelling. There were houses all along the street but these were the only people in sight and there were no cars.

I began running north on North Street, and when I reached the Illinois-Central tracks I left the street and followed them perhaps a half-mile. It was black along the tracks, and cool. I was going east, out toward the college. My mouth was dry and my throat ached and my old head wound seemed to be doing flip-flops beneath my skull, and I couldn't figure what I should do with the gun. I thought of throwing it into the grassy ditch along the tracks, getting rid of it, but then I thought that would be silly, because when they catch a cop killer they kill him, and I might as well die shooting as arguing or praying. I had no chance of getting outside the town on foot. By this time the sirens were howling all over town, you could hear them, far away and like hornets but some of them getting closer, closer and louder. Dear Virginia—good and wonderful Virginia. She was a snake, a beautiful snake, but not that big a one. She must have panicked. The wind along the track was black and salty and cold.

I needed a car.

I left the tracks and angled through and across the ditch to a house with a stone chimney and one of those garages that are part of the house. There was a light on in there, only one light in one room, and no sounds as I circled the house. I went into the garage and there was a green Chevrolet, the doors of which were unlocked. But before I could slide onto the seat an overhead light flooded the garage and a big man in brown slacks and a white polo shirt came out from a door in the side of the house.

"What do you want?" he said. "What do you want here?"

I was sorry he had seen me because I didn't want to kill him and my head hurt and I didn't even want to have to think about it. And then it hit me that there was no reason to kill him because the women who had come out on the porch of the white frame house, or rather the woman and the girl, had got a look at me and by now my description was no secret. "Get in there and find you a chair and don't move out of it," I snapped.

"Yes, sir."



"Now then, when do we eat?"

"I'm going to watch you through the window a while, and if I see you pick up the phone you're a dead soldier."

"Yes, sir, I won't."

"Now, get."

"Yessir."

The car was no good. If I took it now he'd hear me leave and phone immediately, giving the model, color, and tag number. I wheeled and sprinted out of the garage, curving between it and the house next door as a squad car passed out front, the siren wide open, blinkers burning.

You've never heard a siren until you've heard one looking for you and you alone. Then you really hear it and know what it is and understand that the man who invented it was no man, but a fiend from hell who patched together certain sounds and blends of sounds in a way that would paralyze and sicken. You sit in your living room and hear a siren and it's a small and lonesome thing and all it means to you is that you have to listen until it goes away. But when it is after you, it is the texture of the whole world. You will hear it until you die. It tears the guts out of you like a drill against a nerve and it moves into you and expands. I'm glad I'll never have to listen to another siren. I'm glad no one will ever hunt for me again and that I'm finished with running and hearing them hunt me.

I was walking toward the college, along Oak, when they caught up with me, the lights of the squad car swinging into me from somewhere that I can't remember even though I know this town the way I know my hand. By then I must have been dazed because one of them had the drop on me with a sawed-off shotgun before my eyes were fit for that light, and another was jerking the gun from me.

Then one of them brought his knee up into my groin and I bent over and someone kicked me in the side of the head and said, "You dirty cop-killing rat."

Someone else said, "Why'd you kill them boys?"

I said, "Because they were shooting at me." It didn't matter what I said anyway so there was no use dragging Virginia along for the ride. One of them kicked me or hit me in the side and I went out cold and when I came around I was standing beside the squad car somewhere out in the country and there were three of them there with me. There were some trees, but there was a cleared space, too, between the trees. I didn't know any of them. It was like I'd told Virginia, I'd been away a long time. They unzipped the blue poplin jacket I'd bought for the armored car robbery, shucked it off me, then removed everything else but my socks and shorts. The shorts seemed very white in the dark, shockingly white. Then they took them off, too, and spread me backward over the hood of the squad car and began questioning me. They wanted to know who had been with me in the burglary of Clarence Kellam's grocery and who was with me later when the two policeman caught up with me on North Street and I killed them. I told them I didn't know anything about the grocery store burglary and they didn't like my answer. I blacked out again, the pain swimming up through my belly and exploding in my chest.

In a way it was funny.

Virginia and I cruising along so secure in the knowledge we had done a perfect job on the armored car, so smug about our fine engineering and planning, our network of plans within plans and destruction of evidence. Then what happens. We run into a brand new mess, in connection with a burglary here in Masonville, a petty, silly little two-bit job we had nothing to do with. That's why the two policemen had stopped us. They didn't know me at all when they stopped us at the intersection of West Fourth and North and if I'd said I was Tim Sun-

blade and this was my wife, Virginia, and we were on our vacation, going to Mobile, that might have done it. If only Virginia hadn't started shooting. They didn't give a damn who murdered the custodian of an armored car in Denver, who rolled off with $180,000. They just wanted to find the fellow who swiped thirty-five dollars and a side of bacon from Clarence Kellam's in Masonville, Mississippi, the night of November first, the night of right now.

It certainly had its comic side.

Except that they kept hitting me in the face and ribs and the way I was tied onto the hood of the squad car was not comfortable.

And they had a game. It seems all three of them smoked cigars and in this game they tried to figure out every possible way to use me for an ash tray. Sometimes the cigars went out. But they lighted them again and kept inventing new ways and places to stub out the cigars. They had plenty of matches. I stuck to my story—I knew nothing about the burglary—and it was a true story and they didn't like it, but what they disliked particularly was I had killed two of their buddies, and wouldn't tell who was with me when I did it. It surprised me that I would cover for Virginia. But then, if I'd said a gorgeous blonde was with me, that wouldn't have changed my status as an ash tray because it didn't sound like the truth. You don't think of gorgeous blondes and grocery-store robberies at the same time. And, further, she hadn't asked to come to Masonville where we got in all the trouble, she'd wanted to stay with the green canvas hat and the Heavenly Hash. Let her grow fat and spend her money and find her way back to Beekman Place. Again I lost consciousness.

Next time I came around I had all my clothes on and we were pulling up in front of City Hall and there was a crowd of at least five hundred out front, screaming and waving at the squad car. One of the three cigar-smoking policemen said to me, "How'd you feel if we turned our backs on you now and let them tear you limb from limb?"

"I'd rather be an ash tray," I said.

Faces were all around the windows of the squad car. I sat on the back seat between two of the cigar smokers, and the one who had asked me how I felt about the crowd said now: "You're sure you won't tell us who was with you?"

"Sure," I said, "I'll tell you."

He leaned forward. "All right."

"I was with Lana Turner."

Inside the jail, in the basement of City Hall, was worse than the earlier questioning. The mob of townspeople was crammed in the corridor that led from the chief's office past the jail kitchen to the cell block in the rear. Someone in the crowd, no doubt an old school chum of mine, spat in my face. I was taken first to the chief's office and that was bad, because I'd known him from the time I was a baby and he used to fix parking tickets in exchange for Dad's fixing his teeth. The chief used to bring us quail sometimes when he'd been hunting.

"Son," he said, looking around apologetically at the others in the room, apparently feeling he'd made a mistake in calling me son, "the reason the boys are going so hard on you is they think there were others with you and that if we're going to catch 'em we'll do it tonight or not at all."

"That's reasonable," I said.

"I don't want these fellows to hurt you, but you can see how the quicker they get the information, the better it will be all 'round."

"Sure."

"Now don't you want to say something?"

"Yes."

"All right, boy, say it for me."

"Don't your hired monkeys ever run out of cigars?"

He winced. "We want to be fair with you, Kenneth, if you'll only talk."

There must have been fifteen city policemen in the chief's office now and three or four state highway patrolmen and a sprinkling of blue-suited, black-shoed men wearing deputy sheriffs' badges, small gold ones, only slightly larger than the shield on a Phi Delta Theta fraternity pin. One of these deputies came forward and said, "Chief, they's no use messing with him and you know it."

Again they pushed me through the crowd in the corridor, this time to the cell block, and we went inside an empty cell and from there on out the things that happened earlier were purely fun. I remember screaming and the screams were falsetto and I wouldn't have known they came out of me except I felt my mouth open, my jaws locked wide, and I felt the vibration of the screaming and the strain on my throat. The clothes came off again and there was much twisting and pinching and bending after they handcuffed me to the footrail of the cot. I'd pass out and come back, on and off like a bad bulb, and each time I came around the cot was bloodier, and once one of the policemen, or deputies or state patrolmen, protested that he didn't like me bleeding all over his handcuffs because they were new and had cost him a lot of money. Finally I told them that when the shooting started I was with a fat red-headed woman and that she weighed around a hundred and seventy pounds and was pregnant with my child. They disliked this story most of all, even more than the Lana Turner one. And they hated the color of the car I gave them. I told them it was yellow. The Packard was black at night, and in daylight it was midnight blue, the kind with silver winking down deep in it underneath the blue.

The next time I came to the handcuffs were gone and I was lying on my back on the cot, alone in the cell, the light off. A drunk was singing in the next cell. I tried to lift my right hand to feel what was left of my face and my arm wouldn't work. I raised the left hand without much trouble and put it against my face and screamed. I must have stuck one of my fingernails into a bad place.

It was quite a homecoming.

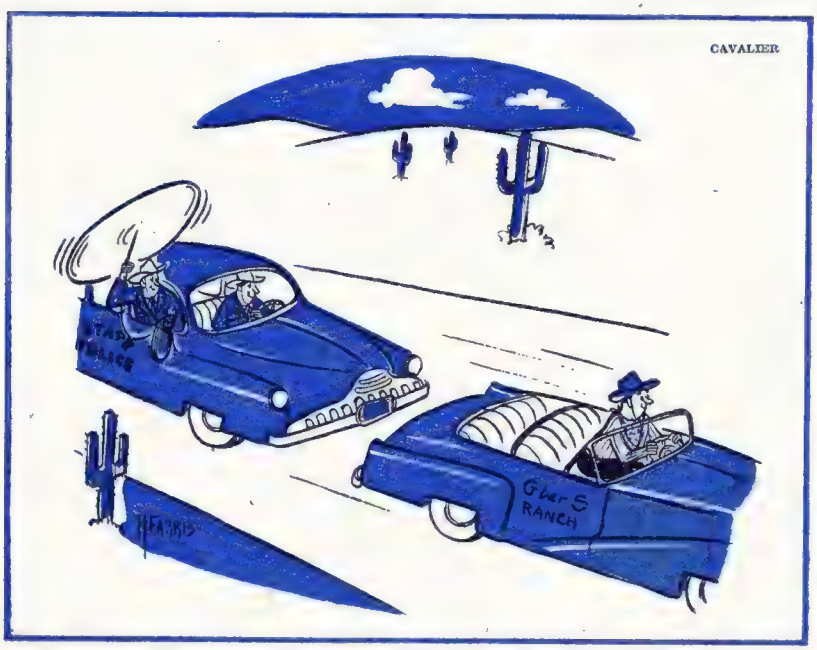
The county attorney's name was Kenneth, just like mine. He was tall and willowy with long flat feet and the kind of cheeks that flash red, then drain pale in a second, as if blood flowed into a plastic disc and out again. I had gone to school with him, traded knives and sucker balls and Holloway suckers of caramel with him. All of this was in his face when he came into the cell and they locked the door behind him and left us alone. "Kenneth, why'd you do it?" he said.

"Kenneth," I said, "I cannot tell a lie. I shot them because I wanted to see their blood squirt."

"Now, Kenneth," he said, frowning, "don't talk like that."

We kept Kennething each other for ten minutes, maybe more, and my face was killing me and my right arm hung down as if there were no bone in it. I was polka-dotted with pain from the cigar burns and the places on my buttocks hurt especially. I Kennethed him and he Kennethed me and we got nowhere, because he wanted what the others wanted, for me to get down on my knees and sob out the whole thing, the color of the getaway car and who I'd been with. The woman and girl in the white frame house on North and Fourth had got a glimpse of the car as it skidded away from the corner, but in the excitement they hadn't paid much attention to it. Or so Kenneth Hawkins, prosecuting attorney for Mulvaney County, Mississippi, told me. Virginia was probably back in New Orleans, bathing with Loralee and Eddie. Maybe they were floating chocolate-marshmallows in the tub. I grinned, but cut it short when it seemed my right cheekbone might fall off in my lap. I didn't want that to happen, because I didn't want to see my right cheekbone any sooner than I had to.

Then the district attorney joined us. I had never seen him before, but his voice and mannerisms were the same as those of the county attorney, only more so, and he brought with him a little recording machine and there was a translucent, slick blue re-



cording disc on its turn table. He was wearing a dark-gray pin-striped double-breasted suit and on the knees of it the stripes were worn off. He wore a shirt with genuine French cuffs and he was so proud of them he kept shooting them out of his jacket sleeves and glancing at them as if they were a perpetual and pleasant surprise to him. He plugged the wire into the light socket and monkeyed with the recording machine. When he was finished he handed me a small microphone, the size of a biscuit, saying, "You'll talk into that."

"Sure."

He flipped a switch and the blue disc began revolving. "O.K." he said, borrowing the mike, and giving it back to me when he was finished: "Start at the beginning and just tell us what happened from the time you hit town until now, tell it in sequence and keep it simple."

"Fine," I said into the mike.

He borrowed it again to say: "And you understand we are offering you no reward, no promises of a softened sentence, nothing."

"Right."

"And," he said into the microphone, "everything you say, you will say of your own free will and accord." He handed it back to me hurriedly.

"Yes."

"O.K., let's go with it."

I cleared my throat. "The friendly cow all red and white I love with all my heart . . ."

"You want me to get the cops back in here with you?" he said.

"She gives me milk with all her might to eat with apple tart."

The district attorney snapped the switch on the recording machine and he and the county attorney moved off to the corner of the cell nearest the door, their backs to me, whispering. Kenneth Hawkins kept shaking his head negatively, and the district attorney kept nodding his head up and down, until finally Kenneth Hawkins said in a loud whisper, "Darn it, Ted, if we let them beat him any more they're going to kill him. Moore and O'Malley are dying to get in here and finish him off, and so are all the others. And even if they don't kill him they'll make such a mess of him it'll be all over the county, and that will be great for the defense, won't it?"

The defense? I felt better. I don't think it had occurred to me they would bother with a trial—not until then. I flipped the switch on the microphone. I mooed into the microphone, then hung it on its hook on the side of the portable machine.

They left, taking the machine with them, and Kenneth Hawkins said he would come back soon and bring me some cigarettes and a doctor to look at my arm and face. "You need some attention," he said in his county-attorney voice, making it sound official and immediate and as if he had statistics and various authorities to support his decision.

It must have been ten in the morning.

Virginia had had more than twelve hours to get away. The more my face hurt, the more I wanted her to get away. I lay down and I was dozing when Moore and O'Malley clanged the door behind them. I guess it was Moore and O'Malley because Hawkins said they were the ones who wanted most to finish me off and this pair worked along those lines. They began by playing around with my right arm, the bad one, and that was stupid because it knocked me out and they had to go to a lot of trouble with ice water and ammonia. At noon when the Negro trusty came with the stew and bread on the tray they were still with me. We didn't take any time out for lunch, but one of them drank the water on the tray and it seemed to revive him. When he came back to me he broke the fingers of my left hand, one by one, neatly and with no wasted action, the way you'd snap celery at the table, almost politely. That finished me for the day, but I remember I hung on until he reached my thumb, and I thought as I floated off into the screaming pain and grayness that if I had taken this much of it I could take whatever else there was, without talking, and that when I regained consciousness this time maybe I'd be stronger, strong enough to butt the brains out of my head on the stone walls. Or maybe I could find a way out. Then the grayness settled more firmly about me, I was embedded in it and it was made of whirling knives and strange talk. And in it there was crying, the crying of my mother and of Mrs. McDonald, who wanted to drink a milkshake with me. And my mother was crying harder and harder and saying to Mrs. McDonald: "If the war hadn't hurt Kenneth's head he would be just as nice as anybody, as nice as anybody at all." And Mrs. McDonald said the VA had a new way now to pull shell splinters out of heads that were hurt in the war. Mrs. McDonald said they poured milkshake in the hole and then they packed it with ice. Milkshake. Ice. All through it was this terrible thirst that was also part of the pain, and I heard myself say ringingly, as if I spoke into one end of a tunnel and listened to myself at the other: *My dad used to be a taxpayer here and he helped pay for the pipes for the water, and you better not drink my water. He'll pull every tooth from your head.* And Virginia and Mr. Damon were watering some grass, holding onto the same hose, and Mr. Damon said he had a nephew named Runyan, and with this he laughed and jetted water up into the elm trees, his long custard-colored teeth the same color as his undershirt.

After they transferred me from the city jail to county jail it was better and a doctor came in daily to look at me and smear zinc oxide on me and check the splints on my fingers. He was a young doctor with the tender unmarked hands of a woman and he told me there were people in the town who had heard what had been done to me and that it might cost the chief of police his job. "I think you're a skunk," the doctor said, "but even so we can't have our law men here acting like a bunch of rabid apes."

The zinc oxide felt good on the scabs.

The doctor said the idea was to put me together as good as possible in the next three weeks, in time for my arraignment in circuit court after I'd been indicted by the grand jury. He said if Circuit Judge Horace Swanburne saw my face in such a fix it would prejudice the judge against the prosecution and the judge would not admit my confession as competent evidence in the murder trial.

I sat up. "Confession, what confession?"

"Your confession to the police," the doctor said. "They say you spilled the whole works. In detail. All except the kind of car and whoever you were with. And they've sent your gun and the bullets from the bodies to FBI ballistics in Washington. You're done for, boy." He appeared pleased that I was done for.

I said, "I haven't signed anything."

He said, "You don't have to, because every officer in the department will swear from the stand you confessed, that you were not under duress, and if the judge throws out the confession he's calling them liars, or idiots, or both. Unless, of course, he denies admission of the confession on the grounds it was obtained under pressure. That's possible; but still he'd be calling them liars."

"And the ballistics?" I said. "That's competent evidence?"

"Ah, yes. The ballistics is competent. That's the thing that will burn you for sure." He smiled. "How're the fingers today?"

"Fine."

Jailer Turner Lovett came to the door, and said, "Kenneth, Nona's downstairs to see you. Nona Hickman." The doctor finished tightening the bandage on one of the splints, got his things together, and Lovett let him out of the cell. I couldn't say anything at all. Lovett waited. "You hear me, Kenneth?"

"Say it again," I said. "Say it again, slow."

"Nona wants to see you, she wants to come up here." His voice was sly and obscene. He was one of those white old men with very black hair on his hands, and I'd disliked him as a boy and I disliked him as a man.

My face puckered and all the scabs began stinging at once and I lay down on my back on the cot and looked at the ceiling. Lovett leaned back against the bars of the cell and I could hear the butt of his gun clinking against the iron as he waited. I couldn't think, or I wouldn't. Finally he left me there and I heard him going down the steel stairs and then he was back in the corridor outside the cell and she was with him. I rolled over on my side on the cot and made myself look at her and it was the hardest thing I ever had to do, much worse than the cigars and the pliers and the twisting. She took in my face without flinching, without registering anything, and Lovett said we could talk through the bars for fifteen minutes, then he'd be up for her. The last thing he said to her was, "Miss Nona, with the town all up in the air over this, I don't think you better stay even fifteen minutes if you can cut it shorter."

And she said, "Thank you, Turner, I'll use my fifteen minutes. All of them."

She had a little rectangular package wrapped in a white starched napkin and she stooped and set it down through the bars on the floor of the cell. "Come over here, Ken. Come over here closer to me."

"I'm not coming over anywhere." I managed to sneer through the scabs. "You small-town dames give me a great big roaring pain. You fool around in a porch swing and it isn't enough that it's good and that it's what you wanted. It's got to be love." Her face went white and she hung onto the bars as if I'd hit her. I steadied my voice and went on with it. "You go drooling around the rest of your small, stinking little lives, making something pretty and spiritual out of it."

"Ken, I know what you're doing."

"You gave me what I wanted and judging from the look on your silly little face I gave you what you wanted. But now we've got to sit here and mewl and puke around as if what I gave you was the Holy Grail. You don't undress a girl to give her the Holy Grail."

I pushed my fists down against my sides hard and when her face broke I turned away from her. But what would you have done? With the town boiling mad, did she have any business dirtying herself with a mess like this? Her steps on the stairs were fast and uneven.

That night when I got around to opening the little package I found a slab of devil's-food cake and a pack of Philip Morris cigarettes and two home-made pimiento cheese sandwiches. I took all of it over to the cot and laid it there on the gray blanket and picked up each thing and felt it a long time. I cried all over the sandwiches and when I got to where I could eat them the bread was curled and hard and the cheese was dry. O'Malley and Moore would have loved to

have seen me lying there in the dark with a stale sandwich on my chest, crying my lousy heart out.

The next morning shortly after breakfast they brought Virginia in. I heard her voice downstairs and it could have been no other voice so there was no wondering about it. "Get your filthy hands off me!"

Then some shuffling down the stairwell, far below my cell, and: "Lady, if you'll please quit jumping around I'll let loose of you." Almost courtly. Apparently the report from FBI ballistics had not been received. Then the pinging scrape of feet on the steel stairs and there she was in the corridor, twenty feet away, walking straight toward me on her high red heels, swinging along with her dancer's walk, ignoring the deputy behind her. "Sweetie, what have these mongrel baboons done to you? Oh, my darling!" She ran to me, reaching through the bars for me, clawing my arms with those long nude-looking unpainted fingernails, trying to kiss me through the bars and knocking her little tan go-to-hell hat off on the floor.

"Baby, don't tear the place down." I grinned and suddenly the scabs didn't hurt; and there was the strangest thing happening to me, the old feeling of toughness and smartness drifting back into me, along with the smell of her perfume, her natural baby-smelling perfume. My scabs became more than scabs. They took on something of dash and glamour and the splints on the broken fingers appeared rather rakish.

"You've shaved your mustache," she said. "And where are your lovely William Holden-ish spectacles?"

"I don't need them any more," I said. "Everybody around here knows this is me."

"Lady, if you'll come this way," the deputy said humbly.

"Tim, it was the bullets," she said, ignoring the deputy. "It was shoot, shoot, shoot, all over the place and I never saw so damn many bullets or I wouldn't've left you, sweetie. I was sore at you, but I wouldn't have left you there alone. You know that."

"I know." And all of a sudden I honestly did, or I thought I did. She was lovely. I wanted to touch her all over and all at once and with her there before me Nona was nothing more than a piece of stale cake and some bread. Virginia was like that, she had the power to blot out other women whenever she wanted. I've seen her come into a roomful of pretty women, like Loralee and the others, women who, until Virginia came in, had pretty figures and good strong clear coloring. But when Virginia was there they lost shape and texture and tone and as long as she stayed you might as well have been looking at the others through the butt end of a Coke bottle.

"Lady," the deputy said.

"You be quiet, Grandpa, this is my boy. Oh, Tim, it's been miserable without you. I circled back into town that night. At first I drove out in the country but it was scarey, and I came back and there was a hell of a crowd around the City Hall and in the concrete pit around the police station. I could hear you screaming in there."

"I was in fine voice," I said.

Another deputy came up the stairs, a bigger and less kindly one, and they took Virginia back down the corridor to a cell there on the right of the corridor, about a dozen paces from mine. My cell was at the dead end of the corridor where the stairs came up from below, and it seemed to have heavier, closer spaced bars than the others. And now I realized I'd been so busy being tough and colorful, so wrapped up in the sight of her I hadn't even asked about her arrest. Apparently they questioned her at the police station or outside somewhere because after the deputies left no one came up to see her that afternoon. And she didn't come to the door of her cell. I guess she was sleeping.

I knew that there were three cells between mine and hers. In the one nearest me there was a giant Negro with a shaven head, whose name was Harvester McCormick Tractor Jones, and he was serving time for assault and battery with intent to kill. Beyond him was a smaller Negro with a shaven head, who looked so much like the big one that he gave the impression of being a trick-mirror reflection of Harvester McCormick Tractor Jones. I don't know what his name was, only that he'd been caught operating a stumphole whisky still for a white man in the Piney woods. Jones called him Short. Not Shorty but just Short. Beyond him was a white man named Jimmie, who had made a living as a gambler until he killed another gambler who, he said, cheated him. Jimmie said this other gambler had the card game rigged in a small room with a red-diamond pattern on the wallpaper and he and his crony cut out one of the diamonds and fixed it so it would flap out on a hinge. So the crony could spy on Jimmie's hand of cards. Then the crony, sitting behind the tricky wall, would signal the crooked gambler with an electric key that made a short rod come up out the floor and tap against the sole of the crooked gambler's shoe. One tap for an ace. Two for a deuce, and so on, with special combines for the face-cards and for flushes and straights. And beyond Jimmie's cell was Virginia's.

The day after she came was Sunday and the city chaplain, a fellow who Jimmie told me later had flunked out as pastor of a regular church, came and stood in the corridor, using a music stand for a pulpit and preaching about a "bruised reed." I do not remember the significance of the bruised reed, but however it got bruised was the point of the sermon, I imagine. The Reverend Penney pronounced it *broo-zed*, rather than bruised. I've seen the Reverend Penney a number of Sundays since then and always meant to ask him about the reed.

When he was through preaching he asked if anyone wanted to make a testimonial. Harvey McCormick said in his deep, brooding voice that he had one to make and he made it: "I want to say that whereas I done stomped my woman and shove an icepick in her hiney I won't do it again if there is an again for me; and that I've done seen the light and see it plain, and praise be to the Lord, Amen."

The smaller Negro said when it came his turn to testify: "I never brought nothing but desolation behind me and to both sides of me and I'm saying right now, right here, I'm taking the Lord in with me forever and ever, Amen."

The Reverend Penney smiled and turned to Jimmie who said he had no testimonial and that furthermore he was sick of hearing the two niggers make the same ones over and over every Sunday; that if he had to listen to that sort of thing he couldn't help it, but the least he could do was not to add to the din; and that aside from this he had known Harvey McCormick all his life and as long as there were ice picks and women to shove them in, Harvey would keep right on shoving. "Why, you run religion like the cigarette companies run their business," Jimmie said reprovingly to the Reverend Penney. "I, Jimmie, find religion is good. None of the harsh irritants of sin in it. Testimonials! My God!"

The Reverend Penney smiled and opened his hymn book and picked out a number and laid the book on the music stand.

Then he walked along the corridor, handing each of us a book, except Jimmie, who wouldn't reach for it. I saw Virginia's hand come out and take one and later, when the singing started, I was surprised she knew the tune to "Holy, Holy, Holy." Her voice was true and high against the voices of the Negroes, and what she was singing wasn't "Holy, Holy, Holy" at all, but the preacher and the others were too involved in their own racket to notice.

What she sang, fitting the words into the cadence of the spiritual, was that the police had the Packard and her gun and all the clothes and money in it (we'd banked all but about $3,000, spreading it thin over a number of banks so as not to arouse suspicion) and that they had found the car where she abandoned it in the woods, later the night after my arrest, after she'd come into town and driven out again; and that they caught her in a cab on the edge of town headed for New Orleans, when the cab driver told his dispatcher to radio police that a woman had offered him two hundred dollars for a thirty-five-dollar ride to New Orleans; that she'd spent most of the time prior to her own arrest in a small hotel in Masonville, dead drunk, afraid to wiggle one way or the other, since the town was stirred up and since she knew the kind of treatment I'd received. The hymn had four stanzas. Then we began "Love Lifted Me," a much slower one, very poor for Virginia's purposes, and all she was able to get across to me during this one was that we had to agree on some kind of story, a common story, hanging the murder of the policemen (the *opps-kay*) on someone else. Some strangers in a green car. The Reverend Penney and the Negroes sang in three entirely different keys and Penney swung wide of the tune on the corners and I had to listen sharp to get any of what she sang to me. The word "murder" sounds odd in a hymn. So does the word "gun." It's no wonder you never find either of them printed into the hymns.

That night the Reverend Penney returned to his iron-bound flock and there was more preaching and singing.

And this time I got the hang of it and was able to get through to Virginia via the hymns. But clumsily, not nearly so well as she did it. I saw Jimmie looking at me peculiarly once and I began singing the real words to the song until he left the door of his cell.

The Reverend Penney threw his arms around when he sang and rocked back and forth and it was so strenuous and demanding the way he did it I don't guess he had time to listen to all the questions and answers Virginia and I were singing to each other. You could tell he was a devoted man. Indeed a dedicated man. But at the same time he was so awed and occupied with himself and what God did for, and meant, to him, that there was something disinterested in his dealings with his flock. A man has only so much energy and so much power of concentration. Harvey McCormick Tractor Jones and the smaller Negro, after the fashion of their race, were more concerned with the melody than the words, and the way it came out of those dark throats was a wonderful thing to hear. No one could sing that beautifully and at the same time listen to anyone else.

Jimmie was the only one who worried me. But I believed his bitterness toward the law would seal him tight, even if he heard.

By the time the grand jury went into session Virginia and I, through the medium of hymns, had worked out a logical and fairly melodious story for the trial. It was built around a non-existent green car, and if it flopped it was still better than no story at all.

There were about three or four days between the time the grand jury convened and the time we actually were arraigned on the

murder charges, and I slept poorly at night during this period. I could lie on my cot and see down the hall to Virginia's cell, the barred door of it narrowed by the slanting angle. I had only a small slit in a window in my cell but there must have been a larger window in hers because some nights the moonlight would come gushing broadly out of her cell, almost bright as day against the floor of the corridor down there. I'd roll over on my stomach, looking at the moonlight and knowing it had washed over her between window and corridor, and wondering how she looked with all that cream-colored hair curving against her pillow in the silver-blue light. I ached for the feel of her, for the smooth miracle of her beautiful body, for the color of her eyes near mine. Nona? Who was Nona? I wanted Virginia. She was a creature of moonlight, crazy as moonlight, all upthrusting radiance and hard silver dimples and hollows. I chewed my knuckles and wanted Virginia. I watched the moonlight spill down through the bars of the door of her cell and wondered how I'd ever thought I was sick of a thing as good as Virginia.

Then I was sitting on my cot, arms stiff against the mattress, blinking.

Turner Lovett, the jailer, was down there outside her door, looking around. Apparently he couldn't see me in the darkness at the dead end of the corridor, but he looked down my way a long time before he fitted the key into her door. Metal scratched lightly against metal and he removed the key, pulled the door open and slid inside, closing it behind him and locking it from within. I saw his fist clamped onto one of the vertical bars as he pulled the door inward until it fitted the sill, then the scratching again, of the key. The moonlight gilded the heavy hairs on his fingers. For the next hour I sat there, sweating, gripped in a pure agony of hate and desire and something else I couldn't begin to explain to you. Whatever it was it shriveled me and weakened me and in the morning I wanted nothing to eat.

The following night I waited for Lovett, never taking my eyes off the corridor for more than a few seconds, watching it even as I lit cigarettes, staring down there at the door of her cell. The walls kept pushing in on me, closer and closer, and I remember that I wanted to jump up on the cot and swing out my arms and push them away from me so I could breathe and think this thing out to its black, filthy limit. It was bad enough in New Orleans, her skating around with Eddie and coming back to me with that exaggeratedly matter-of-fact look in the lavender-gray eyes, saying: "Did you miss me? Were we gone long, sweetie?" You could blame that on the money and the quaint atmosphere of old New Orleans, the wealthy unfettered atmosphere, something nice after a lean spell for a money-drunk girl, who'd been hounded out of a fat spot in New York. You could blame that on all sorts of things. But this was the jailer. To be there in that stinking cell on a dirty cot with a poor, bald-headed, hairy-handed goat, you couldn't chalk that off to atmosphere.

At about one in the morning Lovett popped into the moonlight outside her door and went inside as before.

I heard her giggle, the cot creaked twice, loudly, and there was silence. I heard her say, "No, wait a minute, Turner." The cot creaked again, louder. And there was a dull thump and then a lot of thumps and a low groan.

The door of the cell swung open and here she came down the hall, swinging her hips and holding the keys high and to the side in the moonlight where I could see them. Halfway to me she pivoted, returned to her cell, and locked the door behind her. When



finally she let me out we almost ate each other up. Then: "Tim, the old fool won't stay out forever. We better go on down and get out of here before he yells." She said he had told her there was no one downstairs in the jailer's quarters except Mrs. Lovett and her daughter and that you couldn't wake them with a bugle once they began sleeping and snoring. He was right about the snoring. At the foot of the stairs you could hear it. There was a barred iron gate there separating the stairwell from the reception room, or whatever you want to call it. I got in too big a hurry and spent five minutes trying to find the proper key on the ring. Each key looked huger than the one before it, much too big for the keyhole. And all the keys rattled and clinked and whanged like chimes against one another and against the ring and the door. "Hurry, Tim, I think I heard something upstairs." And the more I hurried the worse it was, until I got the right key into the hole. "Tim, there really is something moving around up there. It must be Lovett." We were across the reception room and working at the lock of the outer door and Virginia's breathing was faster and faster, but no faster than my own. "Hurry, for God's sake, hurry," she said.

Outside, walking toward the New Orleans highway, she said, "I hit him with a stool, a very small stool. It won't last long. But my God, it was fine to hit him." She laughed and squeezed my hand. We didn't see anyone in the streets except a man in coveralls going somewhere to work, coughing and hawking, trying to get rid of last night's cigarettes. I knew all the side streets. There was the feeling of going somewhere, going somewhere new, and then the big diesel trucks were whooshing by on the highway and we were standing in the tall wet grass flagging a ride to New Orleans. Virginia was nervous and doubtful. "It's just a matter of percentage," I told her. "Out of every ten or twenty trucks there is one driver who is neither chicken nor afraid."

The one driver who was neither chicken nor afraid was about my size and age. Virginia sat between us and whenever he shifted gears he managed to brush the back of his hand against her leg.

Virginia whispered to me, "You know, if I'd thought we weren't going to get to use our story about the green car, I'd've not sung all those howling hymns. I wish there were some way now to un-sing them. Especially 'Love Lifted Me.'"

The driver looked around at us. He was not a bad fellow, but he did not like a girl to whisper to another man so soon after he touched her leg. It must have been disconcerting. I didn't blame him for glaring, because he had done it with a nice skill, so that it looked more like shifting gears than petting, but with plenty of petting in it, a niceness of balance and application worthy of a nobler enterprise. To Virginia, this casual touch probably meant no more than putting on her shoes, and that is one fine thing about a woman that you do not find in a lady. A woman does not blow up the importance of a minor thing like swapping a feel of the leg for a ride, intimacy being a relative element and one which a woman understands in its true light. The tires hummed steadily on the moist concrete and Virginia told the trucker he was a fine driver and after that he didn't glare, but talked of his wife and some kind of operation she had as the result of falling on a bicycle seat. The trucker said she fell on the seat years ago, but that the doctor told her it was in a place she wouldn't notice for a long time

and only then if it were repeatedly irritated. "Female trouble," the trucker said, getting the authentic tone into it. "There's all kinds of female trouble. My sister lost all her organs last year. One at a time. Every month they found something new to take out."

"That's the way it is," Virginia said, putting sympathy into it.

"Yeah, dames're funny machines. With a truck you just go in there and tear out the whole rear end and be done with it," the trucker said.

When he let us out we knew all about his wife and sister, and we were good friends.

We knew that by morning the New Orleans papers would be smeared with us, black with us. We couldn't go to any New Orleans bank after our names, and my alias, became public property, so the best thing to do was get out of there, and the faster the better. I told Virginia if only we had the money to fly to Denver and then go on up to Cripple Creek in the mountains where nobody thought to look for anybody, that we could camp up there until the heat cooled.

"I've got the money," she said.

She said the night we were separated after the shooting she got to mulling over the way I'd once had her sew some bills in the panel of a girdle. "I had a girdle and I had some money, so I did it. Does it show?"

"No, how much?"

"Three thousand."

"Dollars?"

"What do you think, pianos?"

"Glory be, baby."

"Glory be to the both of us—for our own glory."

So we flew to Denver, paid four hundred for a jeep, and headed back for the rocks as fast as our little wheels would carry us.

The very tip of the hollow cooking rock stuck darkly out of the snow and there was snow in the hollow of it, mounded high and round like an ice cream cone. The baby cliff which had served as a sleeping shelter last summer was topped with a frozen ledge of whiteness and our swimming pool was a blue glut of ice. We'd left the jeep on the road and climbed the slope together to the campsite, wearing the ski suits and boots we bought in Colorado Springs. Virginia was something to see in a ski suit and a Norwegian sweater with reindeer prancing on the front and all around it. Her bosom bent the reindeer out of shape. She'd lost her hotel fat and the old money-sickness too, I believe, and now it seemed she enjoyed floundering around in the snow up there and using her feet to walk on. I scooped the snow out of the basin of the cooking rock and lifted her up and sat her in the hollow, and I remember we sang and laughed like a couple of loons. My face was almost completely healed and when she rubbed snow into it, we felt good, stingingly good. And we were free. For a while at any rate. We drank from a pint of Harper and chased it with mouthfuls of snow and the whisky went down hot and round as a poker, burning bright in the stomach, then sifting warmly down through the legs and feet, sending little showers of warmness down there. Then we were serious for a time and I leaned against the rock and put my arms around her and kissed her and held her closer and tighter; and the kissing was better and better in the stinging air, until finally I slid her off the rock into the snow. The snow was soft and there was no coldness to it.

It was snowing when we went back to the jeep, the flat khaki-painted hood of the secondhand car white with it and the canvas top sagging under the curve of white.

We finished the bottle in the jeep and I pulled out some gum and we each chewed a piece and it was so cold it broke like glass in our mouths. Until it warmed, the pieces wouldn't stick together in a wad.

Then abruptly I wondered if the custodian of armored car twelve ever had that trouble in cold weather, since he was a man fond enough of gum to smuggle a carton or so into the hereafter with him; and if the water in the shaft was frozen now; and I wondered if he were frozen in a solid block of clear ice in the car, his face against the slits, peering through the ice beyond the car. And at what? We hadn't visited the shaft and now I shook it out of my head and we drove on down to the Imperial Hotel. Killing the two cops had never punished me like killing the custodian. When a man points a gun at you or shoots at you, you feel differently than if he simply drops an empty gum package on your foot. You notice I said killing the *two cops*? I'd got so in the habit of taking all the blame when the police were pushing the cigars into me that now the pattern was sort of burned into me. I seldom thought of Virginia as having killed the blond one and launching the whole mess.

We spent the night in the hotel and the manager told us that if we had trouble getting water out of the faucets to call him. "Now and then I find a rainbow trout in the meter," he said. "And sometimes other fish, smaller ones. It's easy to fix."

The manager was a young man with a bashful manner and we learned later he had been a ski trooper in Italy during the war. His wife was young, too, and they borrowed all the money they could lay their hands on to raise a down payment on the hotel and were buying it mostly on guts and imagination, bringing in the melodrama troupe each summer as an added drawing card and running a modest ski school in the winters. Virginia and I were just people to Wayne and Dorothy Mackin and they were much too busy running the hotel to ask us any detailed questions about ourselves.

The days fell into a relaxing pattern of skiing, or rather learning to ski, eating heavy spiced meals of meat and potatoes, sprawling around the lobby in the evenings with the other skiers, drinking a blackish drink that was mostly rum, and which for some reason skiers fancy above others in that part of the world. The skiing crowd came on week ends and there were no regulars in the middle of the week that winter, except us. We were on the second floor near the staircase and most of the time the fifty other rooms were vacant.

It was fine, but when you are afraid and running from something, the better time you have the worse the suspense you'll be caught. Or so I've found it. When you're having a splendid time the suspense is doubled and redoubled until the fine time collapses around your ears, if you aren't careful.

Our faces and necks and hands were burned a deep chocolate red by the winter sun and at night after we came up to the room from the lobby we were pleasantly tired. Despite the sparkling near-zero cold we slept with the big windows open some nights, piling the feathered comforters high and propping up on our pillows to gaze out at the cold stars and talk of the strangeness and satisfaction of our life together. Virginia never mentioned New Orleans any more, nor New York and Beekman Place. We had read, in a Colorado Springs paper, an Associated Press story that stated what we already knew, that she,

CAVALIER



"Sure it's a play suit—but it's for me *to* play in— *not you!"*

too, was wanted for murder. The ballistics report checked solid against the pearl-handled automatic found in the car, and her fingerprints, taken the day of her arrest, were all over the car and the gun. Kenneth Hawkins had issued an elaborate statement about all this. I told Virginia I'd never heard of a woman going to the chair for murder, or anything else, in Mississippi. She said there had to be a first time for everything and with the kind of luck she'd had all her life it would be just like her to start a new legal fad down there if they caught us. She had her pillow doubled and wadded behind her shoulders and the back of her head against the solid headboard of the old-fashioned bed. "Tim, I've always felt I'd die young, and horribly."

The way she said that sent the shivers up me. "Is the electric chair really horrible?"

"I don't know."

"Does smoke come out of them when they turn the juice on, Tim, like they say in the paper?"

"For God's sake, Virginia."

"No, darling, I'm not joking, I mean it."

"Well, forget it."

"I read once that this man was in the chair and when the electrocutioner threw the switch the smoke came out of the man's head and formed a question mark over him and everybody said it was an omen, that maybe he didn't commit the murder they killed him for."

"Well," I said, "if they catch me, there won't be any question mark. There'll be an exclamation point."

"Do you really think so?" she said in a perfectly serious voice.

"Of course not. Now for Pete's sake shut up, baby, about all that burning." I pulled the covers around my neck. "We're not burning, we're freezing."

"Tim, do they really shave your head?"

"Yes."

"To let the electricity get in it?"

"I guess so."

"I should hate that, sweetie."

She moved close to me, bumping sideways in the bed, like a child, and yet not at all like a child. "And they have a roomful of people watching you when they throw the switch, that's what I hate most, watching the way they would a tennis match, and seeing you later when you're all ugly."

"Baby, just about anywhere you die there's somebody watching. It doesn't make any difference whether they're watching you die in bed or in a chair, somebody's going to be there. It's strictly a spectator sport."

She rolled over and slid her arm across my chest. "That's a nice way to look at it."

"It's the *only* way to look at it."

She shivered, holding me tightly to her. The winter stars blinked distantly in the wind and they were never dearer to me. The light crested the ragged snowline of the mountains beyond the window, pure and clear, dancing against the ridges. "Does it ever bother you a lot, darling, that I am what I am?"

"No." I kissed her on the nose and it was cold and innocent as a button.

"Honestly, Tim?"

"No, the only time you bother me is when you're not what you are."

"That's a lovely thing to say."

"I'm not trying to be lovely. I'm telling you what I think."

"Anyway it's lovely." She was biting my cheek, my right cheek, the one Moore and O'Malley had liked. "Tim, did you ever think that the very fact I'm bad is really a kind of tribute to you, since I've known them all sizes and all ages and all temperatures and *know* what I want in a man?"

"I've thought of it."

"And if you're willing to discount the nastiness, doesn't it make you feel a little conceited?"

"A very little."

"You're lying, darling."

"A little."

"Whenever I used to see married men jerking their lawful wedded wives in and out of cars and steering them down the sidewalks like wheelbarrows it tickled me," she said. "There's something so comical about that kind of possessiveness. Because you can't own anybody by shielding them and bullying them and spying on them. It's just the other way 'round."

"That's not exactly a new idea."

"It's not a popular one either. It's like the electric chair. No matter what I start thinking I wind up with the chair, don't I? Because I know I'm going to die horribly as anyone can die."

And she was right.

But that night I didn't believe her. . . .

Around the middle of December we rented a small two-bedroom cottage south of the hotel. It cost only fifteen dollars a month. Cripple Creek is not quite a ghost town and not quite a live one either. It is deserted except for a few families and most of the men are either miners or commute to Colorado Springs. It is a real estate agent's nightmare, in that you can buy a four-bedroom house for little more than a thousand dollars, yet in most cases untangling titles is next to impossible for records have long since been lost or were burned in the great fire that almost flattened the town years past.

PHOTO CREDITS

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Virginia talked more and more frequently of dying, and I don't know if she truly felt that way or if it was her way of cracking the monotony, but on Christmas Eve she kicked over the Christmas tree and staged a long, violent crying jag. She said the Christmas tree lights used the same kind of electricity that was used in the electric chair and she would be damned if she'd have it in the house. Then she took off her shoe and began dragging a chair around the house and batting out the regular overhead lights until I stopped her. She fought me like a wild woman until she passed out.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

I took to going out by myself on the skis, climbing the tall slopes west of the town and messing around and practicing by myself until I became fairly skillful. But there was a funny thing. It seemed the shaft of the old Katie Lewellyn was always in the back of my head and every day it kept pulling me closer and closer to it when I made these trips up there. I could feel the pull of it. And whenever I came in sight of the tall crooked outbuilding near the shaft I'd stop and lean on my poles and stare at it until the sweat began popping out beneath the windproof clothes. The old building was partly broken in the middle and with the torn batwing of shingles on top like a fingernail, it looked like a giant finger of wood, crooked at me, beckoning. And the custodian had long since crowded Jeepie from my dreams, coming into them in many forms, but always in water and ice. Sometimes he was damp, and again he was drenched or blowing nightmare bubbles through the slits of the armored car and whining, always whining or moaning of the cold. Sometimes he regarded me from a clear bell of ice, and once from a little temple of ice the shape of those things you see along the road in the pictures of Burma. And he was black with cold.

I kept telling myself it was silly to think a dead man in the bottom of a six-hundred-foot hole could keep pulling me and pulling me back to the area of the shaft. I told myself it was the lure of the gold, the knowledge that once men had torn it from the earth there. I told myself I was getting gold-happy like everyone else in Cripple Creek, and they are that, because even the town doctor and the mayor go out in the hills in their spare time and whack away at the rocks with miners' picks. I'd borrowed some books from the Mackins, telling about the evolution of gold mining, and how long ago a cowboy named Bob Womack stumbled onto a fortune in the yellow metal and got drunk and gambled away his claim. And I'd read a book put out by the Denver mint, this one also borrowed from the Mackins and also dealing with precious metals. It said more than $158,000,000 worth of gold ingots can be stacked in a cage five feet square and ten feet high. The pamphlet said a million dollars worth of platinum can be tidily hidden beneath an army cot. It said also that the men who work in the mint at Denver punching out silver dollars and fifty-cent pieces make no more than eight or ten dollars a day, yet one man in eight hours can punch out more than a half-million silver dollars, enough to pay him and all his buddies their salaries for the rest of their lives. I read, too, about vanadium and copper and zinc and aluminum. But it wasn't the idea of metal that kept sucking me in ever tightening circles to the old Katie Lewellyn.

I wanted to look down that hole.

I had the absolutely senseless feeling that perhaps if I looked into the shaft I'd see something down there in the blackness. That maybe this something would ease my mind, or maybe it would drive me stark raving mad, but whatever, I wanted to look. Like a kid who in the middle of the night thinks there's something under his bed.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

One afternoon in the middle of January, an afternoon when Virginia was feeling gayer than usual, we decided to make up some sandwiches and spend the rest of the day on skis and eat somewhere in the hills above town. She had her good days along with the bad, stretches when she was the same tough, beautiful Virginia of last year. There were these brief periods when she said nothing and apparently thought nothing of the dying business. During these times it was as if she couldn't get enough of sensory pleasure, of loving, of eating and drinking, of smells and colors.

We climbed to the crest of Eagle Ridge and ate the sandwiches there and washed them down with hot cocoa from a thermos, then kicked off the skis and walked around up there in the sunshine.

There was a six foot cradle of granite and I slapped the snow out of it with my mittens and we sat there and smoked, still warmed by the cocoa and the food, and enjoying the view from the ridge, hating to leave it. You could see for miles in all directions and I pointed out the building near the Katie Lewellyn and the piles of tailings near several other shafts and we talked about whether or not Golden Cycle was making a lot of money by reworking the Molly Kathleen and how the new machinery was able to process lower-grade ores at a profit. But Virginia kept turning the talk back to the Katie Lewellyn and it was as if she shared the strange feeling about it that I did. She said the Mackins told her that in some of the water-filled shafts like the Katie they had installed pumps so they could get back into

them with the new machinery and work them, and that in one they had drilled through from another shaft at a lower level and were letting the water drain out that way.

I reminded her of what the bartender told us the first time we were in the Gold Bar, of how he had said the Katie Lewellyn was never much of a mine at its best; and that there wasn't much chance our secret would ever be uncovered in this world.

"He wouldn't know," Virginia said. "He was just some college boy earning a summer vacation in the mountains."

I didn't say anything. I was thinking of how it would feel to be the member of a pumping crew sent down into the Katie Lewellyn for preliminary survey after the water had been knocked out of her. How did they make their first trip down? On ladders? Or did they set up the cage and lower it from a cable spool, and what kind of light would they have when they reached the bottom and saw the armored car glinting in the shaft, its round rivetheads glowing, the slits in its walls black and silent? I felt certain that in the fall the heavy iron car had torn free of the shell of the house trailer, and that that was what we heard, that metallic screaming, after we dropped the trailer in the shaft that night in September.

The sun was behind a thready gray cloud now and the wind stiffened on the ridge.

"Tim, we'd better be moving."

"Yes." I helped her into the mess of straps and buckles of the skis, noting for the thousandth time how short and wide and babylike her feet looked. Even more so, in the box-toed ski boots. Then I got into my own harness and we started down the curving gentle slope, and below the level of the ridge it was not so cold.

Down the trail the slope flattened into a kind of plateau and we moved along side by side for a good eight hundred yards to the edge of this where the slope was renewed and from here we had a detailed view of the Katie Lewellyn, which lay between us and the town. The trail swung wide to the left of the shaft, but as we left the plateau I moved off the trail and angled south and Virginia followed without saying anything. Now we could see the jeep where we'd left it on the main road where we began the climb; and it was as if long ago we'd agreed that we would do this thing, and now with the skis slicing cleanly down the slope toward the mine I felt a peculiar sense of relief, as if some weight had been lifted from me. Virginia was right on my heels all the way down. The noon sun had melted the snow slightly and now it was hardening into a crust of frozen clots which glittered roundly. It was perfect for skiing and I don't believe either of us had ever done so well. It is the nearest thing there is to flying. And once your legs and ankles are in shape for it, it is almost effortless as the flight of a bird unless you are doing something fancy or reckless.

Near the mine it flattened out again into another midget plateau and you had to mush it slow and clumsy near the hole and there is no more ridiculous feeling than slopping along this way on the big waxed slats after you have been flying. We sat down on a clutter of ancient timbers, a dozen yards from the shaft, after I'd leaned the skis against the outbuilding. The blood was lumping and pumping and lumping and pumping in my throat and when I tried to smoke the cigarette tasted like tin.

I knew I had to look in that hole.

I put my arm around Virginia. She hadn't said a word since we left Eagle Ridge. I put my hand under her chin and pulled her face around and kissed her.

"Tim, I hate you to do that when you aren't thinking what you're doing." She leaned away from me. She sat there on the timbers, her long slim legs spraddled out stiff, the weight of them against the heels in the snow. She chopped absently at the snow with a ski pole. Finally she said with a shiver, "It's as if all the evil we know is down there in the pit."

I tried to laugh. "Oh, not all of it, baby. Not in one little old six-hundred-foot hole. You underestimate us."

I tried another cigarette and this one tasted better and I gave her one, lit it for her. "Virginia, I'm going to have to look at the shaft."

"Sure," she kept chopping at the snow between her heels with the pole. "I knew you would."

"And you?"

"Yes, Tim. I have to look, too. God knows why, but I have to look."

All the color had left her face. Her voice was sick and thin. I patted her mitten. "Baby, you feel all right?" She raised her eyes slowly from the lip of the shaft and looked at me, her face unmoving, the gaze steady.

"I've the feeling, Tim, this thing, this thing we're doing now, is going to kill us or cure us." She put her hand against my mouth. "No, don't joke, for God's sake don't joke now." She glanced at the shaft as if it might be listening, keeping the mitten against my mouth so that I could feel the trembling inside the dark scratchy wool.

I asked her again if she felt all right.

"I feel like a ghoul. I feel all right for a ghoul."

"Baby, we don't *really* have to look in that hole," I said, knowing I lied, knowing that the hideous magnet in the cold guts of the Katie Lewellyn dragged harder at me this instant than ever before. A slow sickening whirl seemed to move around and past us, as if the air itself had become so thick with evil as to be a tangible force, emptying into the pit, tugging at us, wanting to take us with it. It was the kind of sickness I once felt as a boy, running to show my mother a baby robin I'd found in the Crepe Myrtle, and before I reached her I fell, my weight on the hand with the bird. It was a blind disgust so intense, so very much of what it was, as to carry with it a terrible fascination. The ultimate in horror is, for some unworldly reason, attractive. Hypnotic. For this reason you stare at the face of a leper at Carville. You are riveted at the scene of an automobile smash-up. You may loathe high places and leap irresistibly into the very space that fills you with nausea. A man terrified of snakes may spend hours watching the green metallic head of the python in the cage.

"Tim?" She was holding my hand.

"What, baby?"

"I'm all right now."

I got up and started toward the hole, taking small slow steps in the snow and watching ahead of me, and the blood kept piling up in my throat until I thought I would strangle. My knees were having a time with the weight of my body. They didn't shake exactly, but they weren't right.

"Wait a minute, Tim, I'm coming with you. I'm damned if I'll look into it later, alone."

I heard the small square feet crunching against the snow and then her hand was on my arm and we were moving toward the lip of the shaft together, the wind in cold gusts at our backs, and I wanted to lie down and crawl the last six feet. And I did. And so did Virginia. Both of us on our bellies, her elbow bumping against mine as we edged toward it. There was a broken pick handle frozen tight and slantingly in the earth, maybe two feet from the rim of the hole, and when we reached this Virginia nudged me to move left so she could come around it on the same side with me. She didn't want even the pick handle between us, and now I could hear her crying, really bawling, unashamedly, and it was very loud there in the stillness on the edge of the wickedness that was the Katie Lewellyn. She broke it off in a shuddering sigh when I dropped flat on my belly and pulled her down against me, but she kept whimpering for maybe fifteen minutes and we just lay there, still a foot short of being able to look down over the edge of the thing. "Tim," she said brokenly, "I can't stand it." I told her to turn around and crawl back to the skis and I would be with her in a minute. "No," she said, "I couldn't stand *not* to look either. I think I'm going crazy. I've got to look at it and I can't, like a woman who's known for months she had a cancer and the doctor finally tells her it's there and he tells her where to look to see it. And she must look at it but she can't."

"I know, Virginia."

"Do you, do you really know, about the cancer part of it, what I mean about the cancer?"

"It's eating me, too, baby." Her body jerked almost convulsively against me and her breath on my face was hot and dry. Her eyes, the lovely lavender-gray eyes of Virginia, were very wide and oddly glazed and the brown speckles in them floated big on the surface, each speckle with shape and texture of its own. "Oh, my God," she said. "Oh, my good heavenly God help me."

"You go on back to the skis." I rolled away from her, firming my voice, patting her back and smiling at her. The smile must have been a dry, comic thing to see, because my mouth was so cottony my lips wouldn't slide right. With my lip stuck up high on my teeth I must have looked like a panic-stricken Eskimo dog.

"I'm not going back," she said. "Doctor, I'm ready, show me the goddamned cancer."

Then we were propped on our elbows at the edge of the hole and I found I couldn't look down all at once into the blackness. I was going to have to look first at the top of the opposite wall and let my eyes move down it, a little at a time, getting used to it, the way you do when you're bathing in cold water. Building up an immunity to cowardice by suffering on a small scale and increasing the dose.

I could hear Virginia breathing beside me and our breaths floated white and fluffy over the edge of the pit.

The opposite wall was plain tan dirt for maybe three or four feet down and then it blended into a rusty band of rotten rock no more than twenty inches thick. There were bits of yellowed wire sticking out of it and what seemed to be part of an ancient horseshoe, and what it was doing there I don't know. Below the rusty band was a clearer red, speckled and streaked, and it went down and down in the fading light. All of the rock was rolled vertically, the way the curtain is draped from the overhead rod on the stage of a theatre, in long parallel wrinkles.

Away down was the sable chilliness I had dreaded, jet black and suckingly horrible.

"Geez," Virginia said.

"It's ugly, isn't it, baby?"

"If you fell in there," her teeth chattered, "you'd be insane before you ever hit bottom."

I inched back, saying, "Probably."

"But we aren't going to fall in there," she said, making a kind of question of it.

"No."

"We are going to get up and walk off from here and act as if we hadn't seen the cancer at all, but seeing it helped, didn't it? You can't fight it until you've seen it."

"A deep subject, baby."

This hit her as funny, I guess, lying on the edge of a six-hundred-foot hole and talking about deep subjects. Anyway she laughed. And suddenly her tension appeared broken by the laughter and she was her old self again, cocky and beautiful and totally in command of herself. "Good old Doc Sunblade and his Rocky Mountain Horror Clinic," she said. Then, in a completely serious tone: "Tim, I think I'm cured; I think I'm well, rid of it."

"Fine."

"It's as if looking down there into it released me."

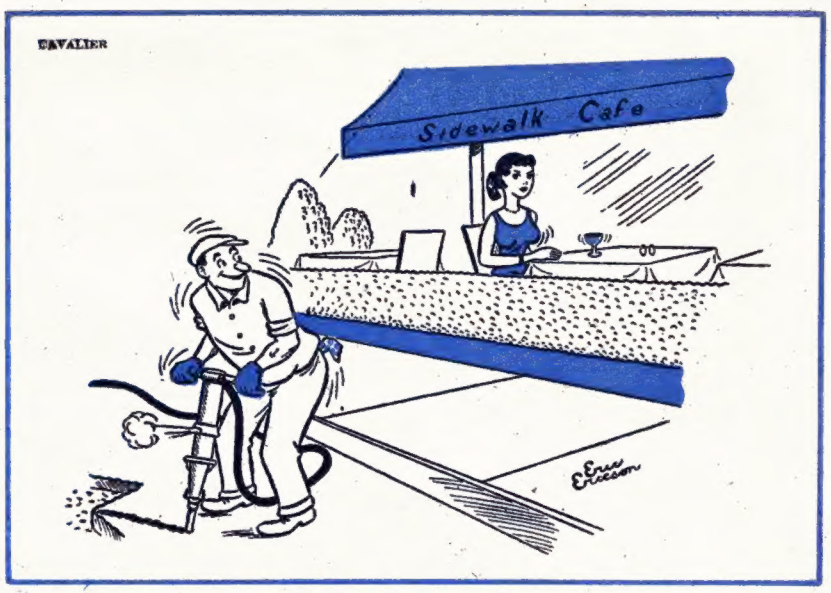
I knew what she meant. I began pushing back, craw-fishing from the hole, my rear humped up and elbows thrusting me back and away. "Come on," I said. Virginia giggled. She got up on all fours and moved back and we climbed to our feet. She was pure radiance then, all aglow, and the very air around her seemed to crackle with confidence and she began talking about a dozen things at once, about what she was going to fix for supper and how she was going to fix it, how she wasn't going to mope around the house any more and let me go off in the hills by myself, how the Mackins said we could buy the old four-story brick railroad station if we wanted a good solid place of our own (the price was a thousand dollars), how next summer we'd move back to the campsite above Cripple Creek and swim in the old pool and sleep under the moon and live to be a thousand or more. The transformation was something to see. From a sick scared little dull-eyed blonde to the same electric Virginia who once tried to claw me to ribbons on the road outside Colorado Springs. From a whimpering, whining thing afraid of her own Christmas tree lights to a woman who spoke of the future with authority, who said "next summer" and "next winter" and "next week." I liked that. If there is anything that I miss now it is not being able to think of next summer and next winter, or even next week.

To my delight she broke into an exuberant little clog dance, so free and light and easy, so wonderfully graceful and healthy it made my chest hurt. She kicked front and back and sideways and the snow from her feet stung my face and we both began laughing and laughing and the world was a lovely white oyster and it was ours to open at that moment. I remember thinking that Virginia in movies would have been a thing of light and a joy forever. And I hooked my arm in hers and we spun 'round and 'round in the snow, giggling like fools, braying our happiness to the heights of the frozen white hills, giddy in our reprieve. For looking into the hole had somehow been just that. A reprieve —if not a pardon.

I think if God were to say to me: "Kenneth, I'm going to let you take your pick and live again any incident in your life that gave you a particular bang," I'd pick that one on the edge of the hole when, after forcing ourselves to look into it, we felt as if we'd rid ourselves of some loathesome disease.

I remember the only thing that worried me then was that Virginia was awfully close to the hole, but she was smiling and her movements were very sure. Then all of a sudden she did a crazy little sideways jig, the way chorines do when they're leaving the stage in line, and her boot caught on the frozen pick handle and she turned slowly, very slowly and lazily, and her back arched prettily as she went over the edge into the hole.

I couldn't move. Lightning couldn't have moved me in that first instant she went down. We were having a hell of a time and then I was there all by myself, just a fellow in the snow by himself. And it seems, thinking



back to it, I stood there an hour before I heard her screams from inside the hole. Before I began crawling back to it, and then I was there and the noise of the screaming was somewhere beneath me but I couldn't see her. And over all of it was the ugly smell of the damp stone and water from the shaft, as strong as the noise and the dizzying pull of the blackness. I remember scrambling around to the other side of the shaft so that I could see the wall along which she had fallen and the first thing I saw then was the cream-colored hair against the red rock of the wall.

She was face down on a narrow bow of rock, not a ledge, but a ragged slanting bulge, no more than forty feet from the surface. The bulge that broke her fall was neither as wide nor as long as her body, but an odd prommel of rock pushed up between the backs of her knees, allowing at least temporary anchorage. Her head hung down over one end of the bow of rock and her feet extended over the pit, too.

And she screamed as if she were looking down into the very pits of hell. Kept screaming.

Somehow I managed to get back to the outbuilding where our skis and the poles were leaning against the wall, and the skis were the longest so I grabbed one of them and started back. I had no idea of distances then and it seemed perfectly logical to get the ski. I recall falling and smashing my face against the heelplate of the ski and getting up and running. I remember throwing myself down on the edge of the pit and dangling the ski down there and waving it at her as if the waving would somehow lift her off the rock and bring her up to me.

Finally it dawned on me that the ski was not forty feet long and would never be forty feet long.

But I still had no more idea of the stretch of that distance than of the number of miles to the moon. I got up and sprinted back to the outbuilding and began tearing at one of the long gray boards that lined its sides, trying to tear it loose from the frame, and it wouldn't come off. My fingers were red with blood, a raw and shining red, and I knew they were hurting even though I couldn't exactly feel them, and the board would not come loose. The edges of it were slippery and wet and I remember you could see the grain of the wood plainly through the red. I went to the clutter of timbers where we'd sat and smoked when we first came down off the ridge and I found among the timbers a very long two-by-four, so long that it seemed to stretch from the pile off into the mountains, and when I'd jerked it free of the pile I held it before me like a pole-vaulter and ran with it toward the shaft. I ran as fast as I could and the timber, which seemed to scrape the sky, was without weight in my hands.

It did not reach halfway to her. And if it had, I don't know what I'd have expected her to do, down there with her poor broken body in the cold eddying edge of the blackness. I dropped it in the hole and she began screaming all over again, as if the dim sound of its plummeting in the depths below her renewed the horror for her.

"Virginia," I yelled. It went down into the hole and came back twice life-size: VIRGINIA.

She didn't answer me but the screaming dimmed into something between a whimper and a gurgle. "Virginia," I said, "I'm going into town and get some ropes and things." And the blackness of the hole bellowed back at me: AND THINGS! I had a crazy impulse to begin laughing, laughing at the top of my lungs.

It began snowing. I got onto the skis and moved down the slope to the jeep. And I remember coming into the lobby of the hotel, but nothing between the jeep and the hotel, and starting up the stairs to my room. Wayne Mackin was there and he told me hello and asked where I was going and I said I was going up to the room for a while and that I would get a rope up there if I could find one.

He looked puzzled. He told me I didn't live there in the room any more and that I lived down the street in the cottage with the yellow door. I asked him who was in my room in the hotel and he said a fellow by name of Clell Dooley, which at the time meant nothing to me, nothing at all. The cottage was cold and the wind was slamming the shutters as I packed some bread and meat in a sheet of oiled paper. Rope, I thought. I need a rope. Clell Dooley, I thought. What a nice round name, round as a rope. A good name. But still there was the rope, and I looked all over the cottage without finding even a clothesline and then I took the bread and meat out to the jeep on the side of the house. Dooley. Clell Dooley. The snow was a stinging slant of white, heavy and almost

opaque in the headlights. I giggled when I hit a bank of snow on the side of the road, the jeep bouncing out of it in a crazy yellow spray as the lights shone into the flurry. I drove back to the hotel, flying blind. Maybe Wayne could tell me about the rope. The lobby was empty except for a man, his back turned to me, sitting on a divan, the rear of which was made of a wagon wheel. Above the gilded curve of the rim of the wheel I saw his gray flannel shoulders and the back of his black curly head plainly and it was the head of Clell Dooley, my good FBI friend who long ago had packed me off to Parchman with a lecture on borrowing other people's automobiles. He is the only man I ever saw who could strut while he was sitting still, and there was no mistaking him. The outside cold must have cleared my fear-riddled head because now for the first time I connected the name of the man who had our old room with the Clell Dooley I knew. I turned slowly, keeping my eyes on him, and he shifted impatiently on the divan, threw down a magazine with a slap, and yawned. It was an official FBI yawn, somewhat like the yawn of Leo the Lion in the movies. He began twisting around toward me as if he felt me in the room and I moved faster then toward the door and he jumped up and stared at me as I cleared the door and hit the seat of the jeep in one flying lunge.

After that things happened fast, fast and white, because the blizzard had really declared itself by now. The jeep was thumping and bumping away from the hotel and somewhere behind me two tiny yellow lights no bigger than peas were on my trail. They got larger and brighter and then they were gone as I took a left turn, and they came back in a moment, very small, but unshrinking now. *Virginia, wait for me. Wait for me, baby.* It was snowing on Virginia. The cream hair was cold and salted with snow and the reindeer on her sweater were bleached and cold down there in the hole. *Wait for me, Virginia baby.* The lights behind me were gone again and I hit a slippery rise and stalled there, beating on the steering wheel with my fists and yelling, until I thought of the four-wheel drive gadget on the jeep, and I tore at the stubby levers until I had them set, the cold grease of the transmission fighting against me.

In four-wheel drive I got rolling again and instinct and habit got me out of town and on the main road. Once I climbed out and walked along a gulley on the side of the road, squinting and feeling a tri-cornered rock marker with my frozen hands. My hands followed the shape of the landmark there, but I did not feel it against my skin, and I remember beating on it until the flesh popped away from the bone on the insides of my fingers. My mittens were gone. *Wait for me, baby.* My fingers were black in the glow from the headlights. It was dead night now. *Don't leave me, Virginia.*

The climb from the main road to the shaft was a soft, experienceless thing, all floating feathers of snow and now and then the wind sweeping a clean black strip against the sky so that the stars showed up there. Nothing hurt me physically, but the picture of her in the shaft on the bow of icy rock was burned into my sick brain, and the weak tears froze before they were shed. Perhaps I'd be in time with the rope. But what could I do with a rope? And what rope? It hit me in an almost smothering wave that I hadn't got the rope, that the shock of seeing Dooley had scared me off the thought of the rope. I was crawling now in the white blackness, the snow gentle and elbow-deep, the meat and bread in my right fist. *Are you hungry, Virginia? The gooseliver's very good tonight, madam, a specialty of the house. Eat it and vomit, madam. Vomit six hundred feet, madam. You won't bother a soul. Don't go away, Virginia.*

I threw the meat and bread into the snow.

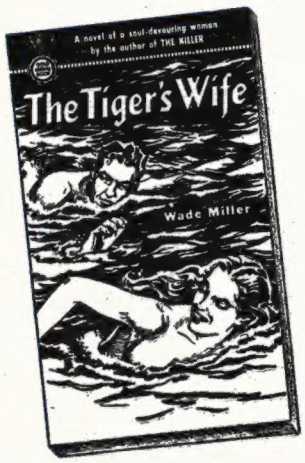
CHAPTER FIFTEEN

The embers of the fire winked in the bright morning air on the edge of the shaft and the black circle of burned wood scraps shone in the sunlight, the cinders clean and glinting as a blackbird's wing. I sat there leaning toward the embers, and I remember thinking it was funny someone should be laughing so early in the morning and I kept looking around to see who it was and I never was sure it was me. I figured it might be somebody up in the rocks eating a prospector's breakfast, the way Virginia once told me the tourists did at Cripple Creek. It was more a cackling than laughing. Virginia? Where the devil was Virginia? How like a woman. Time for our morning swim and where was she now? A half-dozen times I'd slogged down to the old campsite and brushed the snow off the hollow cooking rock. She wasn't anywhere around there, nowhere at all. She wasn't at the foot of the baby cliff where we always slept.

I slapped my hands together and saw the snow fly off them in a thin puff of white, but I did not feel the slapping. How like a woman. Taking the Packard into town and leaving me out here on the edge of this strange hole in the ground. But she drove the Packard beautifully. She pasted the front-left fender onto the center-stripe like it was grooved on a rail. She'd take fine care of it and of the trailer, you could depend on that because no one could drive like Virginia. She was probably getting herself a massage at Mamie's and when she came back to me she would tell me why she'd decided to leave me so long out here by the hole without anyone to talk to. I certainly wanted to talk to someone because she had been gone now ever since I could remember and she was nowhere around earlier when it stopped snowing and last night she'd been so busy bathing in the hundred-dollar bills she didn't know I was alive. And then she bathed in a pile of green canvas hats and Eddie came along and told her to give them back to him because he needed to get back to New Orleans and buy some bracelets for Loralee. I think that's what he said. He was dead drunk on bourbon and Heavenly Hash and some of it was sticking in Loralee's hair but she didn't mind. She always felt fine. Lord, it was lonesome by the hole, so lonesome I crawled over now and then and looked in it, but it was just a deep red hole. On one wall, maybe forty feet down, maybe eighty or a hundred and twenty there was a lump, a kind of bow of rock sticking out, and aside from this there was absolutely nothing to see.

I was really glad to see Clell Dooley come strutting up the slope in the snow with Wayne Mackin and three or four other men, all of them wearing snowshoes and waving at me a long time before they got to me.

I tried to ask them if they had seen Virginia, but they didn't seem to know about her and they began hitting me and it seemed Dooley and one of the other men hit me a great many times before they took me off with them.



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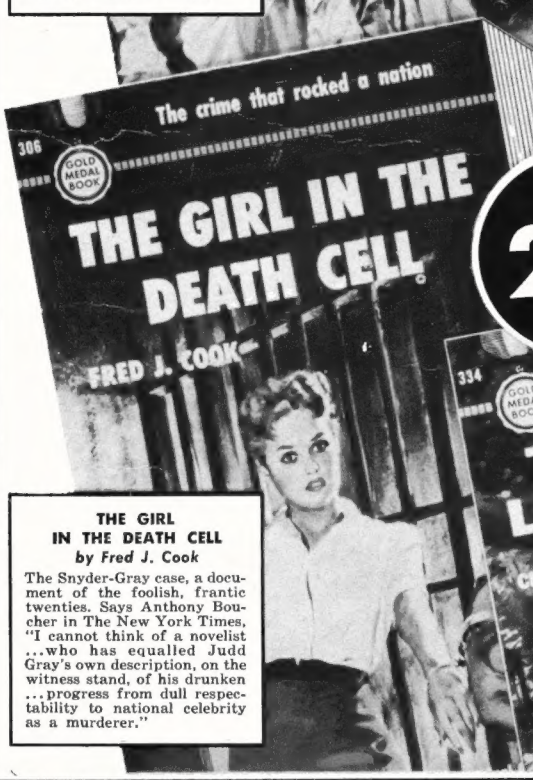
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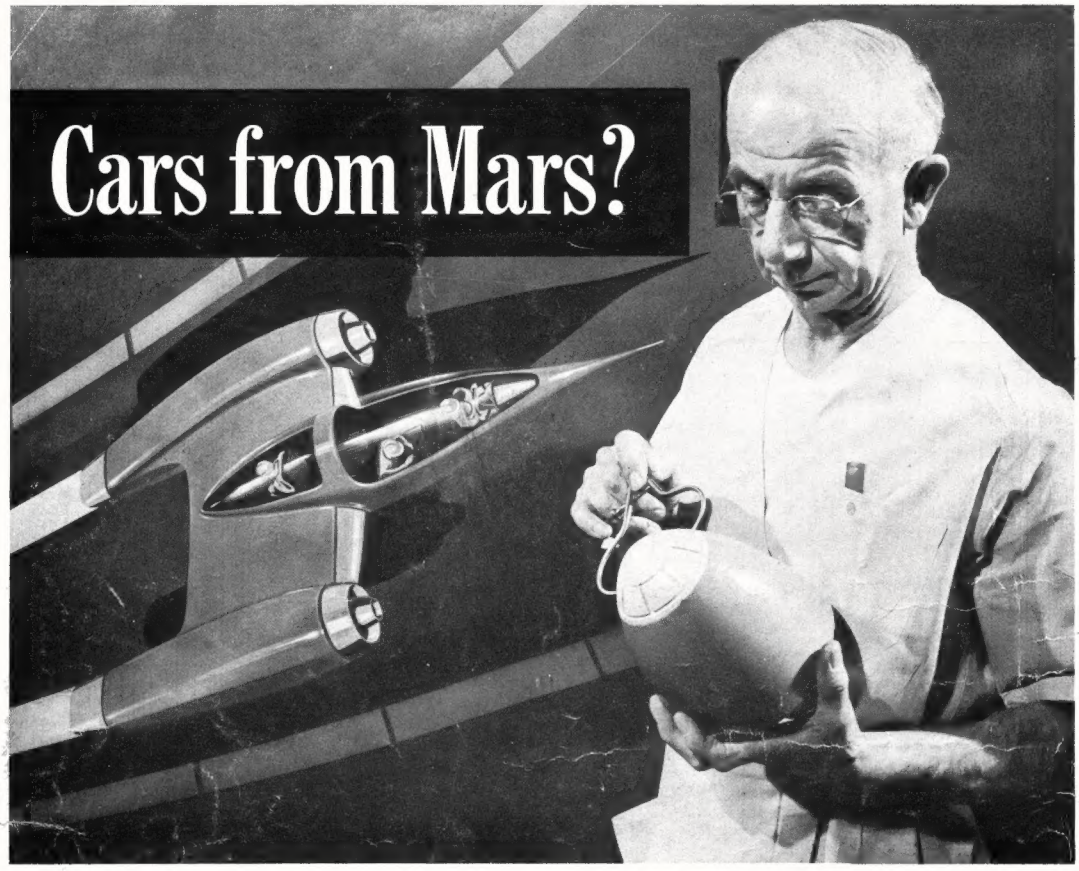
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